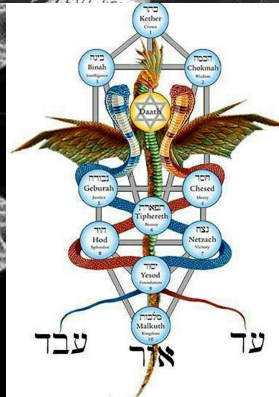
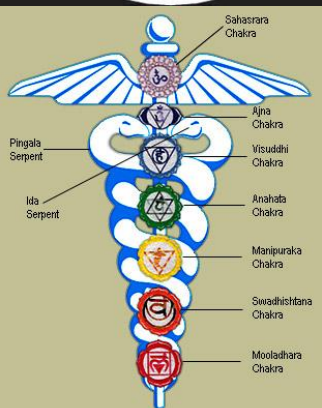
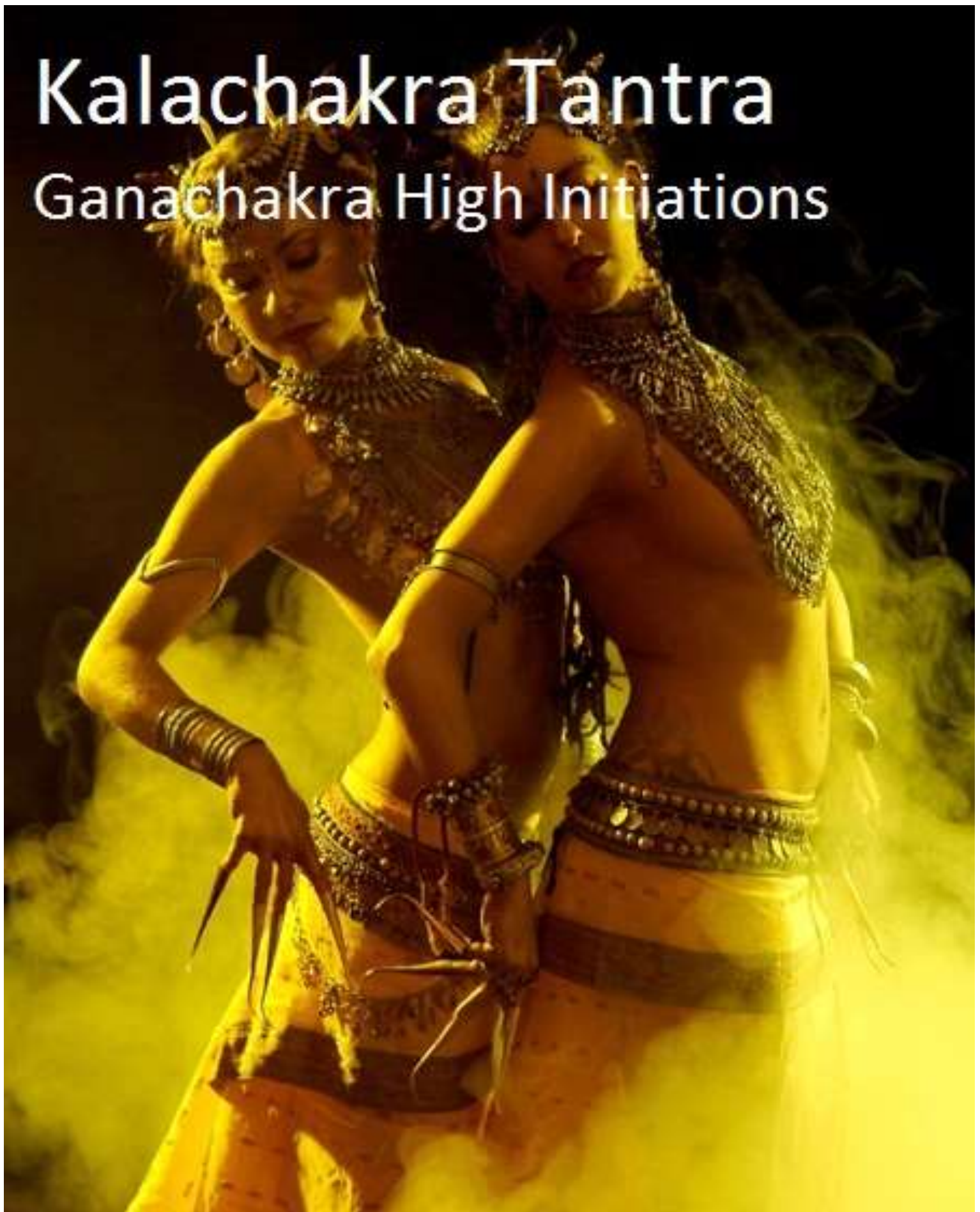


# KUNDALINI SATANISM EXPOSED YOGA SEX MAGICK



# Kalachakra Tantra

## Ganachakra High Initiations



book of formulas into the river. It was fished out by a bathing prostitute and returned to the master. He saw this as a higher sign and began anew with his experimentation with the assistance of the hetaera. But once more nothing succeeded, until one evening his assistant spilt a liquid into the mixture. Suddenly, within seconds, the elixir of life had been created, which Nagarjuna had labored fourteen years in vain to discover.

Anyone who knows the tantras would be aware that the prostitute was a dakini and that the wonderful liquid was either the female seed or menstrual blood. Nagarjuna could thus only attain his goal once he included a *mudra* in his alchemical experiments. For this reason, among the Alchemists of India a “female laboratory assistant” was always necessary to complete the “great work” (White, 1996, p. 6).

There are also European manuals of the “great art” which require that one work with the “menstrual blood of a whore”. In one relevant text can be read: “Eve keeps the female seed” (Jung, 1968, p. 320). Even the retention of sperm and its transmutation into something higher is known in the west. Hence the seventeenth-century doctor from Brussels, Johannes Baptista Helmont, states that, “If semen is not emitted, it is changed into a spiritual force that preserves its capacities to reproduce sperm and invigorates breath emitted in speech” (Couliano, 1987, p. 102). Giordano Bruno, the heretic among the Renaissance philosophers, wrote a comprehensive essay on the manipulation of erotic love through the retention of semen and for the purposes of attaining power.

### **“Ganachakra” and the four “highest” initiations**

The initiation path of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, to which we now return following this detour into the world of seed gnosis, now leads us on to the four highest initiations, or rather to the twelfth to fifteenth initiation stages. The reader will soon see that we are dealing with an extended copy of the four “higher initiations” (8–11). They thus also bear the same names: (12) the vase initiation; (13) the secret initiation; (14) the wisdom initiation; and (15) the word initiation. The difference primarily consists in the fact that rather than just one *mudra*, ten wisdom consorts now participate in the ritual. All ten must be offered to the master by the pupil (Naropa, 1994, p. 193). There are different rules for monks and laity in this regard. It is required of a layman that the *mudras* be members of his own family — his mother, his sister, his daughter, his sister-in-law, and so on (Naropa, 1994, p. 192). This makes it *de facto* impossible for him to receive the *Kalachakra* solemnity. Although the same commandment applies to a monk, it is interpreted symbolically in his case. Hence, he has to deliver to his guru numerous girls from the lower castes, who then adopt the names and roles of the various female relatives during the ritual. Among other things the elements are assigned to them: the “mother” is earth, the “sister” water, the “daughter” fire, the “sister’s daughter” is the wind, and so on (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, p. 125).

After the pupil has handed the women over to his master, he is given back one of them as a symbolic “spouse” for the impending rites (Naropa, 1994, p. 193). There are thus ten women present on the tantric ritual stage — one as the “wife” of the sadhaka and nine as substitutes for the rest of his female relatives. The master now chooses one of these for himself. The chosen wisdom consort bears the name of *Shabdavajra*. It is prescribed that she be between twelve and twenty years old and have already menstruated. First the guru fondles the jewelry of the young women, then he undresses her and finally embraces her. The tantric couple are surrounded by the remaining eight women along with the pupil and his “spouse” in a circle. All the yoginis have a particular cosmic meaning and are assigned to among other things the points of the compass. Each of them is naked and has let down her hair so as to evoke the wild appearance of a dakini. In their hands the women hold a human skull filled with various repulsive substances and a cleaver (Naropa, 1994, p. 193/194).

The guru now moves to the center of the circle (*chakra*) and performs a magic dance. Subsequently he unites with *Shabdavajra* in the divine yoga, by inserting “the jewel of his *vajra*” (his phallus) into her (Naropa, 1994, p. 194). After he has withdrawn his member again, in the words of Naropa, the following happens: “He places his *vajra* [phallus], which is filled with semen in the mouth [of the pupil]’. After that the master gives him his own *mudra*, whom he has already embraced” (Naropa, 1994, p. 194, 195). On the basis of the texts before us we have been unable to determine whether or not the pupil now couples with the girl. This part of the ritual is referred to as the vase initiation and forms the twelfth initiation level.

In the secret initiation (13) which now follows, “the master must lay his own *vajra* [phallus] in the mouth of the pupil’s wife and, whilst the pupil is blindfolded, he [the guru] must suck upon the *Naranasika* of the wisdom consort” (Naropa, 1994, p. 195). Translated from Sanskrit, *naranasika* means ‘clitoris’. “Then,” Naropa continues, “the master must give his own *mudra* to the pupil with the idea that she is his wife” (Naropa, 1994, p. 195). This passage remains a little unclear, since he has already given a *mudra* to the pupil as “wife” during the preceding vase initiation (12).

During the following wisdom initiation (14), the sadhaka, surrounded by the remaining women, unites firstly with the *mudra* which the guru has let him have. But it does not remain just the one. “Since it is a matter of ten *mudras*, the master must offer the pupil as many of them as he is able to sexually possess, and that in two periods of 24 minutes each, beginning from midnight until the sun rises”, Naropa reports (Naropa, 1994, p. 195). He thus has tenfold sexual intercourse in the presence of the master and the remaining women.

In contrast to his guru, the *sadhaka* may under no circumstances express his semen during the ritual; rather he must only bring his drops of *bodhicitta* to the tip of his penis and then draw up the *semen feminine* of one yogini after another (Naropa, 1994, p. 196). Should he not succeed, he is

condemned to hell. There is, however, still a chance for him to escape divine judgment: "If, due to a weakness of the spirit, the *bodhicitta* [semen] is spilled in the vulva, then it is advisable to collect with the tongue that of it which remains outside of the lotus [vagina]" (Naropa, 1994, p. 196).

The fourth, word initiation (15) designates the "supreme state of perfection". In the three prior initiations the sadhaka has drawn off the *gynergy* of his partners and reached a state of bliss. He has now become a *vajra* master himself. This is the result of the inner energy processes in his mystic body, which he has completed during the ritual and which we describe in the next chapter.

What happens now, at the end of this "disciplined" orgy, to the women who participated in the "witches' Sabbath"? The sources are scant. But we nonetheless have access to a translation from the third chapter of the *Kalachakra Tantra* by Albert Grünwedel. This is to be treated with great caution, but taking into account the concreteness of the images the translator can not have made many errors here. Grünwedel tells us that, "At the end of the solemnity a breast-jacket, beneficial to her tender body, is to be given to the blessed earthly formed [i.e., the *karma mudras* mentioned above]. Holy yoginis are to be given another breast-jacket with a skirt" (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, p. 201). And in the following section the tantra recommends giving the girls scented flowers, fruit, and a scarf as mementos of the unique rendezvous (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, p. 202).

The four-stage ritual just described is known as *Ganachakra*. It is the deepest secret of the *Kalachakra Tantras*, but is also known in the other Highest Tantras. Now, at which secret locations are such *Ganachakras* carried out? The famous (fourteenth-century) Tibetan historian, Buston, suggests using "one's own house, a hidden, deserted or also agreeable location, a mountain, a cave, a thicket, the shores of a large lake, a cemetery, a temple of the mother goddess" (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 376). Not recommendable are, in contrast, the home of a Brahman or noble, a royal palace or a monastery garden. The *Hevajra Tantra* is more degenerate and less compromising regarding the choice of location for the *Ganachakra* ritual: "These feasts must be held in cemeteries, in mountain groves or deserted places which are frequented by non-human beings. It must have nine seats which are made of parts of corpses, tiger skins or rags which come from a cemetery. In the middle can be found the master, who represents the god *Hevajra*, and round about the yoginis ... are posted" (Naropa, 1994, p. 46). With the guru in the center these form a magic circle, a living *mandala*.

The number of participating yoginis differs from tantra to tantra. It ranges from eight to sixty-four. Numbers like the latter appear unrealistic. Yet one must bear in mind that in the past *Ganachakras* were also carried out by powerful oriental rulers, who would hardly have had difficulties organizing this considerably quantity of women together in one place. It is, however, highly unlikely that these tantra masters copulated with all 64 yoginis in one night.

Various ritual objects are handed to the women during the ritual of which the majority, if not all, are of an aggressive nature: cleavers, swords, bone trumpets, skulls, skewers. As a cult meal the above-mentioned holy nectars are served: excrement, human flesh, and the meat of various taboo animals. To drink there is menstrual blood, urine, semen, and so forth. The third chapter of the *Kalachakra Tantra* recommends “slime, snot, tears, fat, saliva, filth, feces, urine, marrow, excrement, liver, gall, blood, skin, flesh, sperm, entrails” (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra* III, p. 155).

The sacrificial flesh of the “sevenfold born” which we mention above is, when available, also offered as a sacred food at a *Ganachakra*. In the story which frames a tantric tale, the *Vajradakinigiti*, several dakinis kill a sevenfold-born king’s son in order to make a sacrificial meal of his flesh and blood. Likewise, two scenes from the life of the *Kalachakra* master Tilopa are known in which the consumption of a “sevenfold born” at a dakini feast is mentioned (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, pp. 393-394).

Albert Grünwedel believed that the female partners of the gurus were originally sacrificed at the *Ganachakra* and in fact were burned at the stake like European witches so as to then be resurrected as “dakinis”, as tantric demonesses. His hypothesis is difficult to confirm on the basis of the available historical evidence. Nonetheless, as far as the symbolic significance of the ritual is concerned, we can safely assume that we are here dealing with a sacrificial ceremony. For example, Buston (14th century), in connection with the highest *Kalachakra* initiations and thus also in relation to the *Ganachakra*, speaks of “secret victims” (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 386). The ten *karma mudras* present during the ritual go by the name of “sacrificial goddesses”. One event in the *Ganachakra* proceedings is known as “sacrifice of the assembly”, which can only have meant the sacrifice of the women present (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 386). A further interpreter of the tantras, Abhinavagupta, refers to the *Ganachakra* as the “sacrifice of the wheel” (*chakra* means ‘wheel’) or as the “highest sacrifice” (Naropa, 1994, p. 46).

Everything which we have said about the “tantric female sacrifice” is without doubt also true for the *Ganachakra*. There are documents which prove that such sacrifices were really carried out. In the eleventh century a group of the notorious “robber monks” became prominent, of whom the following can be read in the *Blue Annals*: “The doctrine of the eighteen [robber monks] consisted of a corrupt form of the tantric praxis, they kidnapped women and men and were in the habit of performing human sacrifices during the tantric feasts (*ganachakra - puja*)” (*Blue Annals*, 1995, p. 697). Such excesses were criticized already by the traditional Tibetan historians, albeit with a certain leniency. Thus the Fifth Dalai Lama, who himself wrote a history of Tibet, exonerated the guru of the eighteen robber monks, Prajnagupta by name, of all guilt, whilst he condemned his “pupils” as the guilty party (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 418, note 11).

Obviously, a Buddhist *Ganachakra* is always led by a man. Yet, like much in Tantrism, this ritual also seems to have had a matriarchal origin. The Indologist Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann describes in detail such a gynocentric “circle feast” from the sixth century. It was staged by a powerful oriental queen. In one document it is said of her that, “through her [the queen], the circle king was reduced to the role of a sacrifice which was performed in the circle (*chakra*) of the goddesses” (Mallmann, 1963, p. 172). It thus involved the carrying out of a king sacrifice, found in many ancient matriarchal cultures, in which the old king was replaced by a new one. The sacrificial victim here is at any rate a man. In the *Ganachakra* of Buddhist Tantrism precisely the opposite took place! The yoginis are sacrificed and the guru elevates himself to the triumphant king of the circle.

The gynocentric ritual was also known under the names of “wheel of the goddesses”, “wheel of the mother” or “wheel of the witches”. Its wide distribution in the fifth and sixth centuries, above all in Kashmir, supports our above hypothesis, that there was a powerful reawakening of old matriarchal cults in India during this period.

Contemporary feminism has also rediscovered the matriarchal origins of the *Ganachakra*. Adelheid Herrmann-Pfand is able to refer to several somewhat ambivalent Tibetan textual passages in which in her view *Ganachakras* were formerly directed by women (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, pp. 379, 479). She therefore reaches the conclusion that this ritual is a matter of a “patriarchal usurpation” of a matriarchal cult.

Miranda Shaw on the other hand, can almost be said to revel in the idea of “female witch circles” and takes every *Ganachakra* which is mentioned in the tantras to be a purely female feast. She reverses the proceedings outright: “Tantric literature”, the feminist writes, “records numerous instances wherein yogis gain admittance to an assembly of yoginis. Inclusion in a yogini feast is seen as a high honor for a male practitioner. In the classic scenario, a yogi unexpectedly finds himself in the presence of a convocation of yoginis, perhaps in the depths of a forest, a deserted temple, or a cremation ground. He seeks entry to their assembly circle and feasts with them, receives initiation from them, and obtains magical lore and tantric teachings” (Shaw, 1994, p. 82). Based upon what we have analyzed to date, Shaw’s interpretation cannot be dismissed out of hand. In Buddhist Tantrism women were indeed accorded all power, it is just that at the end of the game the *gynergy* and power of the woman have, through the accomplished use of method (*upaya*), landed in the hands of the male guru.

As always, in this case too the question emerges as to whether the *Ganachakra* is to be understood as real or “just” symbolically. Texts by Sapan (thirteenth century) and Buston (fourteenth century) leave no doubt about its really being conducted. Alexandra David Néel nevertheless concludes that the sacrificial feast in the described form have no longer been

practiced in our century. Symbolic stagings, in which no real women participate and are replaced by substitutes such as vases, are a different matter. According to statements by modern lamas, such ersatz *Ganachakras* were widespread up until the Chinese occupation (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 416).

We would like to briefly discuss whether we are dealing with an orgy in the case of the *Ganachakra*. Archaic people understood an orgy to be indiscriminate sexual mixing within a group. It was precisely the chaotic, ecstatic, and uncontrolled behavior of the participants determined the course of events amid the general promiscuity. Through the orgy ordered time was suspended, there was no hierarchy among the participants. For a few hours the “profane” state of established social order seceded to the “holy” turbulence of chaos. Usually, this occurred so as to invoke the fertility of the earth. It was agricultural and horticultural societies who preferentially fostered the orgy as a high point of their sacred rites. In contrast, the Buddhist *Ganachakra* must be seen as a controlled performance from start to finish. Admittedly it does make use of elements of the orgy (group sexuality and the wild dances of the yoginis), but the tantra master always maintains complete control over events.

Thus, at the end of this presentation of the fifteen initiation stages of the *Kalachakra Tantra* we can establish that all the essential features which we described in the general section on Tantrism reemerge in this “highest” occult teaching of Tibetan Buddhism: the absorption of *gynergy*, the alchemic transmutation of sexual energy, indeed from sexual fluids into androcentric power, the creation of androgyny, the sacrifice of the *mudra* and the *sadhaka*, the destruction of people to the benefit of the gods, and so on. To this extent the *Kalachakra* in essence does not differ from the other tantric systems of teachings. It is simply more comprehensive, magnificent and logically consistent. Additionally, there is its political eschatology, which allowed it to become the state tantra of Lamaism and which we still have to explore.

All the events in the tantric performance which we have described so far have been played out in the external world, in the system of rituals, the sexual magic practices and perceptible reality. The final goal of this visible tantric endeavor is that the yogi absorb all of the energies set free during the ritual (those of the *mudra*, the pupil, and the evoked deities). Only thus can he become the ONE who concentrates within himself the “many”, but above all the masculine and feminine principles, so as to subsequently, in a still to be described second phase, bring it all forth again. From here on he has first reached his perfected form, that of the ADI BUDDHA (the Highest Buddha), who in Tantrism is the ultimate cause of all appearances.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] The self-sacrifice (*chod*): in the chod ritual the pupil, in order to attain enlightenment, offers his own body up to be devoured by the dakinis (who, as we know, represent his master). It preferably takes place at burial grounds. The flesh-devourers appear in the dark of night or at full moon and begin to tear the candidate's skin from his body and to tear him apart piece by piece down to the bone. Even then they do not pause, and instead with a dreadful cracking finally consume the bones and marrow. The initiate "dies" in the process and all of his bodily parts are destroyed. With this he achieves complete liberation from all that is earthly and makes the jump into a state of enlightenment. *De facto*, this ritual killing only takes place symbolically — not, however, in the imagination of the pupil — there the scene is experienced with real emotion, as in a dream. This is almost unbearable for people who behave purely passively. On her travels in Tibet, Alexandra David-Neel encountered ghostly figures, shunned by all, who wandered around lost and insane because they had not mentally survived the chod ceremonies. For this reason, the ritual also prescribes that the adept should imagine himself as not just the victim, but likewise as the active party, the sacrificer in the form of a goddess or a dakini. "As soon as your consciousness enters the body of the goddess, imagine that your former body is now a corpse which slumps to the ground. ... You, who are now the goddess, use the curved knife in your right hand to cut off the skull just above the eyebrows" (Hopkins, 1982, p. 162). Afterwards the pupil, as a bloodthirsty *vajra* dakini, consumes his own body laid out before him. Thus, in this ritual he not only surrenders his life, but likewise also plays the sadistic executioner who destroys it. Since the latter is always a female being, he identifies with the imago of the evil goddess. He thereby attempts to overcome the act which he as a Tantric fears most of all, namely to be killed by the feminine, in that he carries it out on himself in the form of a woman.

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# **Sex Messiah: A Tantric Odyssey.**

*A former monk travels to a  
tantric cult deep in the jungles  
of Central India and becomes a  
“Sex Messiah.”*

**The virginal monk has sex (for the  
first time!), is asked to become the  
successor (master) of the ashram,  
and then realizes he’s just joined a  
cult... full of sexual abuse and  
dysfunction**



My girlfriend, Psalm, and I were sleeping on a concrete slab of floor, the coolest surface we could find in the humid jungle heat of Central India.

A small woman entered the room and tugged Psalm's foot. Peeling herself off of the floor, Psalm stumbled into the hallway. Held in a state between waking and sleep I overheard their conversation.

My husband and I are involved in a fourteen-day ritual, which is necessary for keeping cosmic balance in the universe.

Yes, how may I help you? Psalm said.

Well, the ritual consists of a specific ceremonial practice. For fourteen days, we need the assistance of another couple. The couple we have been using for the past twelve days are no longer eligible to assist us, since the woman has started to menstruate.

How is this ceremony done?

My husband and I worship the sexual intercourse of another couple.

At this point I started freaking out. Some guys might love the idea of having people "worship" their sexual endeavors but the thought of having an audience made me queasy. Even now it's

hard to believe that this really happened. The Indian woman went on to explain the exact details of this ritual.

The male and female are placed naked in the center of the temple wherein they engage in intercourse. The man is to insert his lingam into the woman's yoni 108 times. Before each insertion we pour melted butter on the man's lingam as an offering to the gods. Can you and your husband be the object of worship for this ceremony?

He's not my husband. He's my friend.

Can we use you and your "friend" for this ceremony?

So we would be the ones engaged in intercourse while you and your husband poured melted butter on my friend's penis?

Yes, it is considered quite an honor to be the human forms that we use to worship the gods. My husband and I really need your help. If we don't perform this ceremony tonight the entire universe might be placed into a state of unbalance due to engaging in an incomplete ritual.

As I listened to this conversation I kept hoping that my girlfriend would just say no. This was mainly due to the fact that up until that moment I had never actually put my penis into a vagina. I'd licked one and had my penis orally stimulated but I had yet to discover the joys of intercourse, and I instinctively felt that ritualized butter-saturated sex would be a traumatic introduction to vaginal penetration. The context of this anecdote requires a complex and very difficult explanation.

I was raised in an orthodox Hindu ashram in California. An ashram is a center for learning and often plays the role of monastery for many Hindu communities. My parents owned this ashram, which is all the more unique since they are not of South Asian descent.

My father, Patrick Francis Bishop, was born to an American Army intelligence officer and a nineteen-year-old Japanese girl in Tokyo, in the aftermath of the Korean War. (I have my mother's maiden name, I can only guess it is due to the counter-cultural nature of my parents).

When my grandfather abandoned the family, my Japanese grandmother placed my father up for adoption. At three and a half, my dad found himself in the care of a U.S. military family with an abusive and alcoholic father.

My dad's adoptive family, hopped from one military base to another, finally settling in Oahu, Hawaii. During the counter-cultural movement of the late 1960s my dad ran away from his adoptive home. His progress as a homeless teenager to ordained Hindu monk was made quickly via an introduction to Eastern meditative methods that were popular with hippies.

He went from drug-addled dealer of psychedelic drugs to religious convert, living in South and Southeast Asia by means of his monastic begging bowl. This was not all that uncommon in the

era of Timothy Leary and Ram Dass (formerly Richard Alpert of Harvard University). My dad remained a monk until the early 70s.

Obviously, since I exist, he broke his vows, got married and had sex. American converts to Eastern monasticism rarely stay celibate for more than a year. My dad had made it through four.

Dad married the daughter of a Jewish doctor practicing internal medicine in an underprivileged area of Hawaii and a Japanese woman proficient in Italian culinary arts and French Impressionism.

In a series of strange events, (involving Jack Lemmon and Billy Wilder) my father got into acting and soon became a soap star on General Hospital and pursued a successful career in television. This is such a bizarre story, but true nonetheless. He played Dr. Yank Chung from 1985-1987. His love interest on the show was Tia Carrere (Jade Soong Chung, R.N.). He was the first Asian actor, who wasn't a martial artist, to attain romantic leading man status in the U.S. During this time he also became a prominent figure in an exceedingly orthodox sect of American Hindus in California, which led to my parents owning and operating their own ashram.

In some weird way this is an extremely common Hollywood story (think Kabbalah or Scientology). I became unique among my siblings—there are seven of us—by undertaking the vows of a celibate monk. I rapidly gained a reputation in the Hindu community for an inherent knack for the memorization and exegesis of sacred texts. My dedication to sexual repression only enhanced the image I had been cultivating of yogic purity.

Soon, I was an overachieving yogi and meditator trying to climb the spiritual ladder to perfect enlightenment. All the while completely terrified that someone would find out that I wasn't as holy as I appeared.

The beginning of the end of my career as a celibate monk came when I was 21. In June 2003 my father was hospitalized with an aortal dissection (where the main valve of the heart literally separates from the heart muscle) and died eighteen days later.

This was already traumatic for my family, but belonging to a fundamentalist religious community worsened the situation. The community gurus told us that we would be perpetuating a materialistic vision of life if we grieved the loss of our father. According to the gurus, the goal of life was to break the wheel of samsara and attain moksha.

My younger siblings were ordered to dry their tears and be happy for our father, since he was now free from earthly suffering. Because we were a loving family the gurus worried that we had too deep of an emotional bond, which was detrimental to the cultivation of spiritual detachment. My sister was sent to a Hindu nunnery in Southeast Asia and my little brother was sent to Hawaii. By separating us they hoped to break us of our unhealthy familial attachment.

I financially supported my younger siblings by sending monthly checks from the money I made teaching yoga and meditation, and I rededicated myself to monastic life. Soon, I began to fill the role of my father in the Hindu community in Los Angeles by teaching weekly classes on yoga

scriptures and meditation. Four years after Dad died, the head guru of the California community proclaimed me fully enlightened.

**I was twenty-five. I had achieved the goal, the attainment I had yearned for since I was kid—and it was empty.**

In that moment I saw the game, and felt lonely and alone. I realized I'd only been playing a role. The guru was just maintaining the political hierarchy. She had no insight into my heart and she didn't know my grief. The reputation I gained as a Hindu monk teaching meditation in Southern California and the importance of my family in the history of American yoga made it a really savvy move to promote me up the spiritual ladder. The guru would enhance her legacy through me.

The day after achieving enlightenment, I went out and found a girlfriend. It's probably the best thing I ever did. I was now a disillusioned monk who felt ecstatic just to hold a girl's hand. I could have wound up with any woman; this one happened to be a tantric goddess.

This was Psalm. She was married. She eventually left her husband (who is a decent and kind man) to be with me. My abrupt "blooping" (the term my former Hindu community uses for those who leave) and my alleged affair with a married woman was fodder for not only the gossipers but also for the religious leaders.

These religious leaders were intent upon controlling potential fallout in the community after a respected member had denounced its core values. My denouncement was less dramatic than one might hope, I simply began to openly question the meaning and even the existence of spiritual enlightenment. The entire religious faction was held together by a shared belief in the supernatural-enlightened consciousness of the gurus who led the community.

Once I saw through the charade via my own supposed enlightenment, I voiced my doubts publicly. If I hadn't discredited myself by beginning a relationship with a married woman I might have been heard.

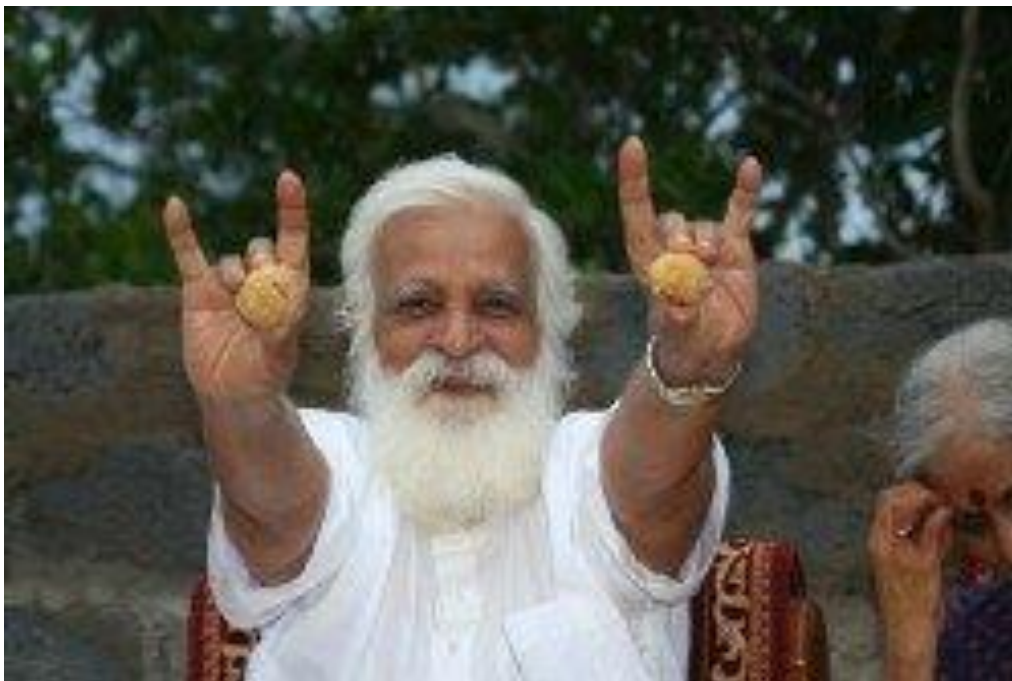
The gurus were concerned that I might still have some influence. They issued a statement declaring me to be not only a fallen monk but also a dangerous threat to Hindu faith. My entire family cut me from their lives and all my friends and former students openly rejected me as a poisonous and possibly evil human being. (The name for this is *aparadha*, which essentially means “against God.” It is the Hindu version of *anathema* (in the Catholic faith), and is used to brand someone as a heretic.)



I felt like an outsider. I felt like a counter-cultural weirdo not only in the world of college degrees, corporate jobs, mortgages, and traditional American family life but now, also, in the world of orthodox Hinduism.

So when my girlfriend, Psalm, told me about this ashram in the jungles of central India that practiced complete acceptance of the human being, regardless of lifestyle, I jumped on the opportunity. Psalm was a yoga teacher and had lived at this ashram, Devipuram, the year before.

In late June 2007, we flew to Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India, to Devipuram. In retrospect I had no idea what I was in for... group sex, girl-on-girl action, and a host of other debaucheries.



## Part Two: Sex Messiah: The Virginal Monk.

Guruji Amritananda (sex messiah)

**Tantric orgies, a temple deep in the jungles of Central India, butter-saturated sex, and a virginal monk falling (hard) from enlightenment.**

After 27 hours of air travel, layovers in Taipei and Kuala Lumpur, and a few near-death experiences on the road driving out of Vizag city I made it to Devipuram. Once you've exceeded 24 hours of air travel and landed in a new time zone you feel as if the air has suddenly turned to liquid and you are now walking under water. So when I met the portly white bearded leader of the temple—Guruji as he was affectionately called—his striking resemblance to Saint Nick was no more strange than the thickness of the air.

The ashram was at the center of a large jungle valley with prehistoric looking mountains and hills on all sides. This isolation was helpful—Devipuram was a kind of Disneyland theme park for sexual perverts with a polytheistic religious bent.



The main feature was a seven-tiered monument to goddess worship with hundreds of life size, ornately painted and carved, statues of divine women. What was most peculiar about these statues was the exquisite detail and vibrancy of the colors used to accentuate and describe their exposed genitalia.

All of the goddesses were placed in positions that openly displayed their sacred vaginas, which were angled toward the open mouths of gaudy dolphins and alligators emerging from the floor to worship the birth canals.

In my jet-lagged state everything seemed like a terrible dream. Vaginas were staring at me from every corner. As a former monk, I felt like closing my eyes and praying to Vishnu out of fear of the female sex organ. Each new pornographic religious idol only loosened my grasp on reality.

Luckily, I had some context since I was fluent in Hindu religious beliefs. Hindus hold the power to reproduce as holy and have made the genital organs into symbols of the creative power in human beings. Still, it was overwhelming to be plunged into a world where giant cocks and pussies were the only things being honored. Usually Hindu images are never graphic and only barely representative of actual genitalia—and definitely aren't the centerpiece of all worship.

Psalm then took me up to the “secret temple,” a padlocked room located on a hill overlooking the seven-tiered palace full of naked female idols. The entire cement floor had been shaped into the lips of a vagina. In the center was a very large clitoris that shot water into the actual cave of the sacred pussy; devout goddess worshippers would fill gallon jugs with this holy liquid. Obviously, at this point, I began to realize that I was in trouble—my expectations before coming to the ashram did not include giant squirting vaginas.

This was a secret temple because most of the “forbidden” or occult practices took place here away from where visitors might stumble on people engaging in butter-saturated sex. My girlfriend had access to this padlocked shrine because she had, the year before, engaged in those forbidden practices in that very temple.

Above this was a Shiva Linga temple. In the back, behind a low wall, was a massive five-foot tall lifelike representation of a thickly muscled cock. It had a foreskin, veins, and was by far the most strikingly pornographic of all the religious iconography.

By the time I had finally laid down for a nap on my first day at the ashram in the guest quarters, my girlfriend curled up next to me on the floor, I simply wanted to sleep. When the small Indian woman disturbed us and proceeded to hard-sell Psalm on forcing me to relinquish my virginity

via ritualistic sex involving a dairy product it didn't seem strange, just like a lot of work and not that much fun.

Believe it or not, this was the beginning of trouble in my relationship. My unwillingness to have my penis lathered in butter by strangers while having sex for the first time in my life was seen as being sexually hung up and unadventurous. I was not only a little gun shy, but unsure of where I drew moral lines. I was just beginning to define myself as separate from two decades of monastic training. But things only worsened from there.



A little context on the history of tantric practice seems prudent at this juncture, before I tell you all about sex that involves food products, girl-on-girl action, and the loss of my virginity. Tantric cults have existed for centuries in India and have always been fringe movements that practiced their arcane arts in secret. Ritualized intercourse and orgies are prominent fixtures within the existing literature on Tantra. Texts like the Kula-Arnava-Tantra describe the types of occult orgies and ritual praxis prescribed and enacted by tantric cults for centuries.

First, a large group of 10 to 50 people select a girl to have coitus with a senior member of the tantric hierarchy. They all go to a secluded place and form a circle around the girl and the senior tantric yogin. Wine, marijuana, and meat are fed to the girl as the tantric yogi begins to stimulate her clitoris, and the group sits and watches.

Once coitus begins the acolytes start to sway and chant in ecstasy. When both the girl and the yogin climax the sexual fluids (semen and vaginal discharge) are then smeared on the foreheads

of both participants as a kind of anointing to seal the divine consummation. When this occurs the encircling group howls and drinks and eats. Then comes the mass orgy.

From this ritual other sexual ceremonial practices evolved. Special focus was placed on the worship and pleasuring of both the male and female genitals. These pujas (ceremonies) usually entailed complex chanting of mantras while stimulating and massaging specific areas of the either the penis or the vagina, culminating with the anointing of sexual fluid on the forehead.

These practices have formed a subculture of tantric practice in India and are something that is done in secret for fear of censure and judgment by conventional Hinduism. Those who are attracted to this tradition are usually enacting some form of rebellion against the caste system (snubbing the divine rights of the priestly and warrior castes) or the puritanical nature of most yogic systems. Westerners who adopt occult tantric practice also seem to be impelled by similar motivations, myself included.



This was the ritual (maithuna) that the small Indian woman wanted my girlfriend and me to participate in. Listening to their conversation, I knew that if Psalm agreed I would be the centerpiece for an orgy my very first night at the ashram, the place where I had sought spiritual asylum.

All my girlfriend had to do was look from the hallway, where she was talking to the small woman, to where I was laying on the floor to see the absolute fear in my eyes. After the woman left disappointed, Psalm lay down next to me.

Why did you look at me that way? She said.

I just felt like that would be a lot for me to take on my first night here.

So you don't think it's morally wrong or anything?

Morally wrong? I don't even know what that means anymore.

A three-day festival in honor of the guru took place the day after I arrived. Hours of smoke filled chanting as Brahmins fed bonfires clarified butter and devout groupies bowed before Guruji (the ashram's Saint Nick lookalike) as they wrapped their hands into the shapes of penises and vaginas.

This practice of forming the hands into the shape of genital organs is understood to be a form of sacred geometry. By contorting the fingers into these sacred shapes (mudras) it invokes the divine energy of the latent creative powers within you and can bring about total spiritual awakening. This basically means that kids who play the four-handed-look-at-the-vagina game in the schoolyards of the American Midwest are in fact invoking powerful divine energies from the universe.

During the festival I could barely find Psalm almost the entire time. There was this little Indian village girl who had a big crush on my girlfriend. They kept disappearing together for hours at a time. When I got tired of trying to figure out where she was I started to socialize. I got to know everyone pretty well and would spend time in the eating area chatting with Western spiritual tourists caught up in the exotic mystique of Eastern eroticism.

They all really liked melted butter. The ritual of melted butter poured over the penis before each insertion into the vagina was quite popular. (Another popular ritual was to rub yogurt all over someone's titties while chanting mantras, and was seen as a high form of worship to the Goddess. They believed that this ritual invoked the sacred Goddess and could bring about divine communion with the universe).

A new friend of mine went everyday to have a young Indian couple perform rituals on her (the same small Indian woman and her husband). The husband would lay my friend on her back in a mud hut behind his house and lather his hands in ghee (melted butter), his hands were dirty and had long yellow fingernails. He inserted his fingers 108 times while reciting ancient mantras. My friend told me this was incredibly spiritual, that she felt God very strongly inside of her 108 times.

Finally the last night of the festival I caught up with Psalm.

What have you been doing with that girl? She seems to know you.

When I was here last year I met her and Guruji asked me to give her lessons in the pujas.

Which pujas?

You know...

No, I don't know.

Yoni puja.

Cunnilingus!

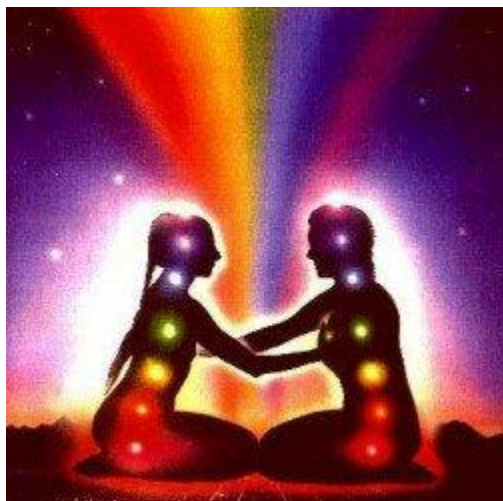
It sounds different when you say it like that.

So is that what you've been doing with her this whole time?

She looked at me and said that I seemed stressed out and that there was nothing for me to worry about. She then massaged my shoulders, which soon became an epic make-out session. This ended all conversation, partly because of my intense hunger for affection. After being a monk deprived of human touch it was nice to have someone kiss and hold me. Affection, for someone so starved like me, was utterly overwhelming. Besides, after recently losing my family I wasn't ready to lose her as well.

The sex was weird. She insisted on dry humping until she climaxed so that she could pretend that we weren't having sex. The levels of denial and sexual dysfunction masquerading alternately as naiveté and spirituality were immense.

It's similar to how Christian teenagers, trying to adhere to chastity before marriage, have oral sex as a kind of divine loophole, but only end up deluding themselves. But obviously this was much more twisted and involved greater levels of denial and psychological gymnastics. Regardless, she wanted to believe that we had a sex-free relationship, that way she could feel okay about fucking other people. Somehow, in her own convoluted way, she didn't want to "cheat" on me.



So she constructed a story about us. We were fellow yogis who shared the path, lived together, did everything a couple would do but never had normal sex. If we engaged in sexual activity it was purely for the attainment of spiritual enlightenment. Therefore, she could have sex with other people and not betray the sacredness of what we had (“pants sex” was a kind of compromise).

It saved her from guilt. Afterward she asked if I would be okay with her engaging in a ritual with 107 other women in the vagina temple on the hill.

What ritual would this be? I asked.

You know, yoni puja.

Why?

I feel incredibly frustrated and held back. I can’t do what I want to do! She said.

You feel held back from having oral sex with 107 women in the vagina temple?

Yes. I feel like I can’t do what I want because you’re here. Last year, when I was here, I could do anything I wanted. Besides it’s a sacred ritual and a once in a lifetime opportunity. And it’s the yoni temple not the ‘vagina’ temple.

Okay, so you feel held back from being able to engage in the sacred ritual/butter covered orgy.

Why can’t you understand this? She said.

Why do you want to do this?

I can’t believe you’re asking me this! Do you want a conventional relationship so bad? Can’t we have a spiritual relationship? Are you such a yogi-puritan that you can’t let me have this?

A spiritual relationship means putting me at risk for STDs?

You’ve turned out so different from what I thought. I thought you were enlightened! She said with absolute sincerity.

The next day we engaged in my first foray into coitus aka intercourse aka “this is the most awesome thing ever!” But our full blown sex was weird really really weird...

## Part 3: Sex Messiah: Breaking the Master.



The virginal monk has weird sex (for the first time!), is asked to become the successor (master) of the ashram, and then realizes he's just joined a cult... full of sexual abuse and dysfunction.

After over two months of non-stop physical contact, actual coitus was bound to take place at some point. It was under the pretext of my girlfriend being able to practice her yogic Kegels while having an object with which to squeeze via pulsating repetitions. According to her, and myself, this was not motivated out of a desire for sex but simply to practice certain mid-level tantric yoga drills for subtle genital muscle control.

Did you just feel that? I was just squeezing.

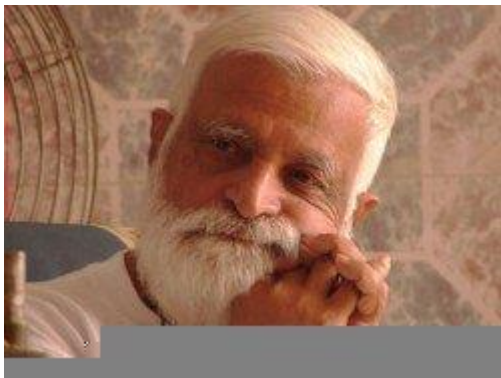
Yeah, you're suctioning me.

Okay, now just you know sort of move in and out... not for pleasure but so I can practice squeezing you while you move. This is helping me in the development of the muscles necessary to raise my kundalini shakti in order to attain enlightenment.

My girlfriend was not wholly to blame for this mechanical and spiritual version of "I'll just dip the tip in." I was incapable of engaging in coitus unless under the pretense of spiritual practice, after a life spent in denial of my sexual urges. My spiritual identity had been completely formed around my sexual purity as a monk. Genuine straightforward sex would have forced me to confront the death of my former self. I was not ready to do this. This suited Psalm who was experiencing guilt for leaving her husband and early childhood sexual trauma.

After getting my lingam sticky for the first time an even greater drama began to unfold. An onslaught of emails from my family and former students started to pour into my inbox. These emails varied from threatening to concerned. For the most part my former students and family members were just hugely disappointed in my choice to leave the religious community. The biggest emotional hit was the stripping of my titles.

Being stripped of your religious titles is like losing your right to call yourself a PhD after spending eight years in grad school, writing and successfully defending your dissertation and then teaching at the university level for a dozen years, all because of writing a controversial mid-career paper. It was losing my spiritual titles and credits that drove me to seek ultimate solace from Guruji.



Guruji Amritananda

I found him giving a lecture in the seven-tiered temple filled with yoni statues. I walked right up to him and began crying. He petted my head and soothed me as if I were a hurt child.

What is wrong? My son what is wrong?

I've gotten emails from family and former students notifying me that I have been officially stripped of my honorifics and accreditation.

Then I will give them back to you. I confer all titles you once had back to you.

Thank you.

You and I will both go to hell together... people are always there to beat you with the stick of judgment. The world likes to beat people with the stick of judgment. There's no need for you to beat yourself with one as well.

I laughed and felt like I had a father again. This friendship became very tender over the next couple weeks. I found myself opening up and coming to love this fat white-bearded man named Guruji

One day, Guruji told me he was getting old and that he wanted to retire but that there was no one to take on his work. He asked me if I would stay and live with him at Devipuram. He said—then you can become the master.

This astonished me. Stripped of my titles and position, I was unable to continue as a teacher in my former Hindu community, yet here was Guruji inviting me to succeed him. Even though I had rejected the idea of enlightenment I still clung to the idea of being a spiritual teacher—it was the only thing I knew how to do. Besides, back in California, I'd worked so hard to get the title of swami that I wasn't ready to give it up just yet. Accepting Guruji's offer is how I became a sexual messiah.

Guruji believed that the West was suffering spiritually due to having an unhealthy relationship with sexuality. He believed the rituals he taught healed these dysfunctions. Guruji pointed to how much I had healed under his guidance. According to him, I no longer judged and beat myself with guilt. I accepted myself as a human being who was both flawed and divine.

I admitted that I had experienced healing at his ashram.

Guruji then told me that I could help save the West. I could become a messiah who brings his message to the rest of the world. He hoped I could heal many thousands of people through lingam and yoni puja (fellatio and cunnilingus respectively) and therefore make the world a better place. I then asked him how the transactions for these rituals should be conducted.

Of course, you'll do this for money, he said, otherwise it will cheapen the sacredness of the ritual. People must pay so they value the service and don't feel any emotional obligation to you.



Yoni Mudra

Guruji then ran a few days of workshops. A handful of other Westerners and I were initiated into the techniques of invoking divine energies within human body parts normally associated with shame. At first we touched these shameful areas of our own bodies as we chanted mantras and visualized spiritual lines of energy.

This was actually healing for me after having, metaphorically, tied my dick into a knot for over two decades as a monk. Then my girlfriend taught me how to perform the rituals of worshipping and pleasuring the genitals via oral stimulation. I soon mastered these techniques on her divine yoni.

I know this sounds strange but Guruji, at the time, had become a kind of surrogate father for me and provided a much-needed sense of home after my family had rejected me—and considered me a sexual deviant—for leaving my life as a monk and for striking up an affair with a married woman.

Guruji shared his own experiences of being rejected by the Hindu community and his attempt at being an authentic human being.

All of this somehow made sense to me at the time. I was a lost boy and a sex cult was the only place where I felt wanted and accepted, even if it required that I become a purveyor of holy cunnilingus.

Then came the moment that turned everything upside down for me. Guruji asked if I would like to give lessons to the girls who cleaned the temple.

Yes, Guruji, I'd love to help them. Would you like me to teach them English?

I'd like you and your girlfriend to teach them pujas.

Why?

The girls must serve some purpose here. They can provide a much-needed service to the visiting Westerners.

My conversation with Psalm, from a few weeks earlier, came flooding back and I finally allowed myself to confront what I already knew but had been avoiding. She was engaging in oral sex with that girl from the village who cleaned the temple. The realization was too much for me (or at least the admittance of the truth). Everything was crumbling all over again.



View of Devipuram from the hills

In panic, I climbed a hill that overlooked a large valley filled with steaming jungle. I sat on a rock and meditated for hours. This was not my country. This was not my language or my culture. In the end, I was an American whose parents adopted Eastern beliefs in the counter-cultural movement of the 1960s and I was not really a Hindu.

I had one more night at the ashram before I was to fly back to California. I began to reflect on my time there. Guruji had a habit of saying very nasty morally questionable things in such an incredibly sweet way you almost missed the comment. He made it all sound so normal and spiritual and kind.

It really was a mind fuck—the whole group had a talent for making you question moral and social boundaries. These discourses on what was right and wrong (and not judging people)

seemed loving until you realized it meant sexually enslaving teens and selling them to European and American predators.

Guruji had a penchant for saying “man” in a really groovy way that made all the pretty Western girls giggle and swoon with devotion. He interpreted the symbol AUM as a literal representation of a vagina connected to a pair of breasts and a penis. He even meditated while watching hardcore pornography. How could I not have seen that this was the dark side of moral relativism? How had I fallen for outright perversion? How desperate had I become?

The next morning I packed and went to find Guruji. He was making an MP3 recording for a meditation practice. I came in right when he was saying, “If you practice oral sex let the man ejaculate and then smear the seminal fluid on the third eye of both partners.” This was the wisdom he had to share.

Still, I let him hug me goodbye and reinforce his offer to have me come back and be the “master.” I had no moment of boldness. I did not make a demonstration of righteous indignation. I was still too emotionally fragile to put up a fight for anything.

The truth about Guruji broke my heart. To stand up to him meant that I’d have to finally confront the truth about my real dad. The father who raised me in a fundamentalist religion and made me feel that the only shot I had at happiness was to reject life itself as a monk. Being a monk meant giving up on sex, relationships, human love, and any potential for intimacy. But my dad had died and I wasn’t ready to grieve him let alone confront the reality of who and what he was.

I wasn’t ready to become an adult.

All of my gods were dead. I had no moral righteousness to rely upon. At my core I just couldn’t hurt those girls or anybody else. And so I left without saying anything. I never became the sexual messiah that Guruji wanted me to be just as I never became the guru my Hindu community wanted me to be. I was just a really messed up and confused former monk and now failed sexual messiah trying to find his way.

On the plane flight back to America, Psalm and I broke up. Sadly, here too, I was not the strong one. She broke up with me, because she knew deep down that we were different. I was monogamous at my core, while she was prone to polyamory. We got back together a dozen times before I finally cut it off for good and realized that I would have to construct a guiding philosophy that was entirely my own.

She continues to work as a sexual messiah. She runs international workshops and teaches sex workers in India the arcane practices of tantric yoga—providing a spiritual context for their prostitution and thereby empowering these underprivileged Indian streetwalkers to be sexual messiahs themselves. She deeply believes that the greatest healing is found in oral sex, if performed with intention and mantra.

Guruji still lives at his ashram in Central India training future messiahs in the healing potential of genital discharges and ritualized sex with dairy products as lubricant. I know of at least half a dozen sexual messiahs (trained by Guruji) practicing in Europe and America.

## Shyam traveling through India

The term “sexual messiah” is my own and reveals more about me than anything else. It is now a cliché to say that humor is often born from deep pain. My own psychological defenses are quite obvious in this narrative. Humor and sarcasm are often a way of avoiding pain, but they can also be ways of transfiguring it.

The Freudian implications of my early celibacy have a lot to do with my dad. I didn’t want to compete with him or be in conflict with him, so I strangled my own sexuality. I’ve made light of a lot of serious stuff, both to avoid the pain of talking about it earnestly and to transfigure it. It may all be a foolish attempt to delude myself that I now have power over it through storytelling. But the truth is if I can’t laugh at myself and my own delusions I might not be able to have sex ever again.

The burden of my past would cripple my penis.

And I really want to have sex, a lot of sex.

I missed out on human warmth and affection for too long as a monk. But in leaving monastic life I went in the opposite direction. Weirdly, it was Guruji who helped me find a middle ground between two extremes.

There is a reason why sex addicts are also capable of completely denying their emotional needs, much like celibate monks deny their own humanity. Guruji’s bad example gave me a reference point—as I left celibacy—by demonstrating to me the delusional trap of trying to rationalize sexual dysfunction through pseudo-spirituality and messianic pretensions.

It was an abrupt and radical awakening to my own fragmented and deformed sexuality. It would have been all too easy to continue rationalizing my own dysfunction through dishonest sex via tantra. Whether it was monasticism or tantric sex, both were disingenuous and ways for me to avoid having to confront uncomfortable truths about my own psyche. I could still disconnect from myself while engaging in ritualistic sex just as I had detached from my emotions and sexual urges in my life as a monk.

Seeing how completely fucked up Guruji was, I knew I did not want to be like him. More importantly, I didn’t want to continue lying to myself.

For the first time in my life, once I recovered from Guruji’s ashram, I just wanted to be human.

## 4. THE LAW OF INVERSION

Every type of passion (sexual pleasure, fits of rage, hate and loathing) which is normally considered taboo by Buddhist ethical standards, is activated and nurtured in *Vajrayana* with the goal of then transforming it into its opposite. The Buddhist monks, who are usually subject to a strict, puritanical-seeming set of rules, cultivate such “breaches of taboo” without restriction, once they have decided to follow the “Diamond Path”. Excesses and extravagances now count as part of their chosen lifestyle. Such acts are not simply permitted, but are prescribed outright, because according to tantric doctrine, evil can only be driven out by evil, greed by greed alone, and poison is the only cure for poison.

Suitably radical instructions can be found in the *Hevajra Tantra*: “A wise man ... should remove the filth of his mind by filth ... one must rise by that through which one falls”, or, more vividly, “As flatulence is cured by eating beans so that wind may expel wind, as a thorn in the foot can be removed by another thorn, and as a poison can be neutralized by poison, so sin can purge sin” (Walker, 1982, p. 34). For the same reason, the *Kalachakra Tantra* exhorts its pupils to commit the following: to kill, to lie, to steal, to break the marriage vows, to drink alcohol, to have sexual relations with lower-class girls (Broido, 1988, p. 71). A Tantric is freed from the chains of the wheel of life by precisely that which imprisons a normal person.

As a tantric saying puts it, “What binds the fool, liberates the wise” (Dasgupta, 1974, p. 187), and another, more drastic passage emphasizes that, “the same deed for which a normal mortal would burn for a hundred million eons, through this same act an initiated yogi attains enlightenment” (Eliade, 1985, p. 272). According to this, every ritual is designed to catapult the initiand into a state beyond good and evil.

This spiritual necessity to encounter the forbidden, has essentially been justified via five arguments:

Firstly, through breaking a taboo for which there is often a high penalty, the adept confirms the core of the entire Buddhist philosophy: the emptiness (*shunyata*) of all appearances. “I am void, the world is void, all three worlds are void”, the *Maha Siddha* Tilopa triumphantly proclaims — therefore “neither sin nor virtue” exist (Dasgupta, 1974, p. 186). The *shunyata* principle thus provides a metaphysical legitimization for any conceivable “crime”, as it actually lacks any inherent existence.

A second argument follows from the emptiness, the “equivalence of all being”. Neither purity nor impurity, neither lust nor loathing, neither beauty nor ugliness exist. There is thus “no difference between food and offal, between fruit juice and blood, between vegetable sap and urine, between syrup and semen” (Walker, 1982, p.32). A fearless *maha siddha* justifies a serious misdeed of which he has been accused with the words: A fearless *maha siddha* justifies a serious misdeed of which he has been accused with the words: “Although medicine and poison create contrary effects, in their ultimate essence they are one; likewise negative qualities and aids on the path, one in essence, should not be differentiated” (quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 69). Thus the yogi could with a clear conscience wander along ways on the far side of the dominant moral codex. “By the same evil acts that bring people into hell the one who uses the right means gains salvation, there is no doubt. All evil and virtue are said to have thought as their basis” (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 174).

The third — somewhat ad hoc, but nonetheless frequent — justification for the “transgressions” of the *Vajrayana* consists in the Bodhisattva vow of *Mahayana* Buddhism, which requires that one aid and assist every creature until it attains enlightenment. Amazingly, this pious purpose can render holy the most evil means. “If”, we can read in one of the tantras, “for the good of all living beings or on account of the Buddha’s teaching one should slay living beings, one is untouched by sin. ... If for the good of living beings or from attachment for the Buddha’s interest, one seizes the wealth of others, one is not touched by sin”, and so forth (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 176). In the course of Tibetan history the Bodhisattva vow has, as we shall show in the second part of our study, legitimated numerous political and family-based murders, whereby the additional “clever” argument was also employed, that one had “freed” the murder victim from the world of appearances (*samsara*) and that he or she thus owed a debt of thanks to the murderer.

The fourth argument, which was also widespread in other magical cultures, is familiar to us from homeopathy, and states: *similia similibus curantur* (‘like cures like’). In this healing practice one usually works with tiny quantities, major sins can thus be expiated by more minor transgressions.

The fifth and final argument attempts to persuade us that enlightenment *per se* arises through the radical inversion of its opposite and that there is absolutely no other possible way to break free of the chains of *samsara*. Here, the tantric logic of inversion has become a dogma which no longer tolerates other paths to enlightenment. In this light, we can read in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* that “the most lowly-born, flute-makers and so forth, such [people] who constantly have murder alone in mind, attain perfection via this highest way” (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 128). Yes, in some texts an outright proportionality exists between the magnitude of the “crime” and the speed with which the spiritual “liberation” occurs.

However, this tantric logic of inversion contains a dangerous paradox. On the one hand, *Vajrayana* stands not just in radical opposition to “social” norms, but likewise also to the original fundamental rules of its own Buddhist system. Thus, it must constantly fear accusations and persecution from its religious brethren. On the other there is the danger mentioned by Friedrich

Nietzsche, that anyone who too often looks monsters in the face can themselves become a monster. Sadly, history — especially that of Tibet — teaches us how many tantra masters were not able to rid themselves of the demons that they summoned. We shall trace this fate in the second part of our study.

### The twilight language

In order to keep hidden from the public all the offensive things which are implicated by the required breaches of taboo, some tantra texts make use of a so-called “twilight language” (*samdhya-bhasa*). This has the function of veiling references to taboo substances, private bodily parts, and illegal deeds in poetic words, so that they cannot be recognized by the uninitiated. For example, one says “lotus” and means “vagina”, or employs the term “enlightenment consciousness” (*bodhicitta*) for sperm, or the word “sun” (*surya*) for menstrual blood. Such a list of synonyms can be extended indefinitely.

It would, however, be hasty to presume that the potential of the tantric twilight language is exhausted by the employment of euphemistic expressions for sexual events in order to avoid stirring up offense in the world at large. In keeping with the magical world view of Tantrism, an equivalence or interdependence is often posited between the chosen “poetic” denotation and its counterpart in “reality”. Thus, as we shall later see, the male seed does indeed effect enlightenment consciousness (*bodhicitta*) when it is ritually consumed, and the vagina does in fact transform itself through meditative imagination into a lotus.

Of course, in such a metaphoric twilight everything is possible! Since, in contrast to the extensive commentaries, the taboo violations are often explicitly and unashamedly discussed in the original tantric texts, modern textual exegetes have often turned the tables. For example, in the unsavory horror scenes which are recounted here, the German lama Govinda sees warning signs which act as a deterrent to impudent intruders into the mysteries. To prevent unauthorized persons entering paradise, it is depicted as a slaughterhouse. But this imputed circumscription of the beautiful with the horrible contradicts the sense of the tantras, the intention of which is precisely to be sought in the transformation of the base into the sublime and thus the deliberate confrontation with the abominations of this world.

The scenarios which are presented in the following pages are indeed so abnormal that the hair of the early Western scholars stood on end when they first translated the tantric texts from Tibetan or Sanskrit. E. Burnouf was dismayed: “One hesitates to reproduce such hateful and humiliating teachings”, he wrote in the year 1844 (von Glasenapp, 1940, p. 167). Almost a century later, even world famous Tibetologists like Giuseppe Tucci or David Snellgrove admitted that they had simply omitted certain passages from their translated versions because of the horrors described therein, even though they thus abrogated their scholarly responsibilities (Walker, 1982, p. 121). Today, in the age of unlimited information, any resistance to the display of formerly taboo pictures is rapidly

evaporating. Thus, in some modern translation one is openly confronted with all the “crimes and sexual deviations” in the tantras.

## Sexual desire

Let us begin anew with the topic of sex. This is the axis around which all of Tantrism revolves. We have already spoken at length about why women were regarded as the greatest obstacle along the masculine path to enlightenment. Because the woman represents the feared gateway to rebirth, because she produces the world of illusion, because she steals the forces of the man — the origins of evil lie within her. Accordingly, to touch a woman was also the most serious breach of taboo for a Buddhist from the pre-tantric phase. The severity of the transgression was multiplied if it came to sexual intercourse.

But precisely because most extreme estrangement from enlightenment is inherent to the “daughters of *Mara*”, because they are considered the greatest obstacle for a man and barricade the realm of freedom, according to the tantric “law of inversion” they are for any adept the most important touchstone on the initiation path. He who understands how to gain mastery over women also understands how to control all of creation, as it is represented by him. On account of this paradox, sexual union enjoys absolute priority in *Vajrayana*. All other ritual acts, no matter how bizarre they may appear, are derived from this sexual magic origin.

Actually, the same tantric postulate — that the overcoming of an opposite pole should be considered more valuable and meritorious the more abnormal characteristics it exhibits — must also be valid for sexuality. According to the “law of inversion”, the more gloomy, repulsive, aggressive and perverse a woman is, the more suitable she must be to serve as a sexual partner in the rituals. But the preference of the yogis for especially young and attractive girls (which we mention above) seems to contradict this postulated ugliness.

Incidentally, the *Kalachakra Tantra* is itself aware of this contradiction, but is unable to resolve it. Thus the third book of the Time Tantra has the following suggestions to make: “Terrible women, furious, stuck-up, money-hungry, quarrelsome...are to be avoided” (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, p. 121). But then, a few pages later, we find precisely the opposite: “A woman, who has abandoned herself to a lust for life, who takes delight in human blood ... is to be revered by the yogi” (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, p. 146). The fourth book deals with the “law of inversion” directly, and in verse 207 describes the *karma mudra* as a “gnarled hetaera”. Directly after this follows the argument as to why a goddess must be hiding behind the face of the hetaera, since for the yogi, “gold [can] be worth the same as copper, a jewel from the crown of a god the same as a sliver of glass, if unheard of masculine force can be received through the loving donations of trained hetaeras ...” (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra IV*, p. 209) — that is, the highest masculine can be won from the basest feminine.

In this light, the *Chakrasamvara Tantra* recommends erotic praxis with haughty, moody, proud, dominant, wild, and untamable women, and the yogini *Laksminkara* urges the reader to revere a woman who is “mutilated and misshapen” (Gäng, 1988, p. 59). The *Maha Siddha* Tilopa also adhered strictly to the tantric politics of inversion and copulated with a woman, who bore the “eighteen marks of ugliness”, whatever they may be. His pupil Naropa followed in his footsteps and was initiated by an “ugly leprous old crone”. The later’s successor, Marpa, received his initiation at the hands of a “foul-smelling ‘funeral-place dakini’ ... with long emaciated breasts and huge sex organs of offensive odor” (Walker, 1982, p. 75).

Whilst the ugly “love partners” threaten at the outset the way to salvation and the life of an adept, at the end of the tantric process of inversion they shine like fairy-tale beauties, who have been transformed from toads into princesses. Thus, after the transmutation, a “jackal jaws” has become the “dakini of wisdom”; a “lion’s gob” the honourable “Buddha dakini” with “a bluish complexion and a radiant smile”; a “beak-face” a “jewel dakini” with an “pretty, white face” and so forth (Stevens, 1990, p. 97). All these charming creatures are under the complete control of their guru, who through the conquest of the demonic woman has attained the qualification of sorcerer and now calls the tune for the transformed demonesses.

For readily understandable reasons the fact remains that in the sexual magic practices a preference is shown for working with young and attractive girls. But even for this a paradoxical explanation is offered: Due to their attractiveness the virgins are far more dangerous for the yogi than an old hag. The chances that he lose his emotional and sexual self-control in such a relationship are thus many times higher. This means that attractive women present him with a even greater challenge than do the ugly.

The tantras are more consistent when applying the “law of inversion” to the social class of the female partners than they are with regard to age and beauty. Women from lower castes are not just recommendable, but rather appear to be downright necessary for the performance of certain rituals. The *Kalachakra Tantra* lists female gardeners, butchers, potters, whores, and needle-workers among its recommendations (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, pp. 130, 131). In other texts there is talk of female pig-herds, actresses, dancers, singers, washerwomen, barmaids, weavers and similar. “Courtesans are also favored”, writes the Tibet researcher Matthias Hermanns, “since the more lecherous, depraved, dirty, morally repugnant and dissolute they are, the better suited they are to their role” (Hermanns, 1975, p. 191). This appraisal is in accord with the call of the Tantric Anangavajra to accept any *mudra*, whatever nature she may have, since “everything having its existence in the ultimate non-dual substance, nothing can be harmful for yoga; and therefore the yogin should enjoy everything to his heart’s content without the least fear or hesitation” (Dasgupta, 1974, p. 184).

Time and again, so-called *candalis* are mentioned as the Tantric’s sexual partners. These are girls from the lowest caste, who eke out a meager living with all manner of work around the crematoria. It is evident from a commentary upon the *Hevajra Tantra* that among other things they

there offered themselves to the vagrant yogis for the latter's sexual practices (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 168). For an orthodox Hindu such creatures were considered untouchable. If even the shadow of a *candali* fell upon a Hindu, the disastrous consequences were life-long for the latter.

Since it annulled the strict prescriptions of the Hindu caste system with its rituals, a fundamentally social revolutionary attitude has been ascribed to Tantric Buddhism. In particular, modern feminists accredit it with this (Shaw, 1994, p. 62). But, aside from the obvious fact that women from the lower classes are more readily available as sexual partners, here too the "law of inversion" is considered decisive for the choice to be made. The social inferiority of the woman increases the "antinomism" of the tantric rituals. "It is the symbol of the 'washerwoman' and the 'courtesan' [which are] of decisive significance", we may read in a book by Mircea Eliade, "and we must familiarize ourselves with the fact that, in accordance with the tantric doctrine of the identity of opposites, the 'most noble and valuable' is precisely [to be found] hidden within the 'basest and most banal'" (Eliade, 1985, p. 261, note 204).

Likewise, when women from the higher castes (Brahmans, 'warriors', or rich business people) are on the Tantric's wish list, especially when they are married, the law of inversion functions here as well, since a rigid taboo is broken through the employment of a wife from the upper classes — an indicator for the boundless power of the yogi.

### **The incest taboo**

There is indisputable evidence from archaic societies for the violation of the incest prohibition: there is hardly a tantra of the higher class in which sexual intercourse with one's own mother or daughter, with aunts or sisters-in-law is not encouraged. Here too the German lama Govinda emphatically protests against taking the texts literally. It would be downright ridiculous to think "that Tantric Buddhists really did encourage incest and sexual deviations (Govinda, 1991, p. 113). Mother, sister, daughter and so on stood for the four elements, egomania, or something similar.

But such symbolic assignments do not necessarily contradict the possibility of an incestuous praxis, which is in fact found not just in the Tibet of old, but also in totally independent cultures scattered all around the world. Here too, it remains valid that the yogi, who is as a matter of principle interested in a fundamental violation of proscriptions, must really long for an incestuous relationship. There is also no lack of historical reports. We present the curse of a puritanically minded lama from the 16th century, who addressed the excesses of his libertine colleagues as follows: "In executing the rites of sexual union the people copulate without regard to blood relations ... You are more impure than dogs and pigs. As you have offered the pure gods feces, urine, sperm and blood, you will be reborn in the swamp of rotten cadavers" (Paz, 1984, p.95).

## Eating and drinking impure substances

A central role in the rites is played by the tantric meal. It is absolutely forbidden for Buddhist monks to eat meat or drink alcohol. This taboo is also deliberately broken by *Vajrayana* adepts. To make the transgression more radical, the consumption of types of meat which are generally considered “forbidden” in Indian society is desired: elephant meat, horsemeat, dogflesh, beef, and human flesh. The latter goes under the name of *maha mamsa*, the ‘great flesh’. It usually came from the dead, and is a “meat of those who died due to their own karma, who were killed in battle due to evil karma or due to their own fault”, Pundarika writes in his traditional *Kalachakra* commentary, and goes on to add that it is sensible to consume this substance in pill form (Newman, 1987, p. 266). Small amounts of tit are also recommended in a modern text on the *Kalachakra Tantra* as well (Dhargyey, 1985, p. 25). There are recipes which distinguish between the various body parts and demand the consumption of brain, liver, lungs, intestines, testes and so forth for particular ceremonies.

The five taboo types of meat are granted a sacramental character. Within them are concentrated the energies of the highest Buddhas, who are able to appear through the “law of inversion”. The texts thus speak of the “five ambrosias” or “five nectars”. Other impure “foods” have also been assigned to the five Dhyani Buddhas. *Ratnasambhava* is associated with blood, *Amitabha* with semen, *Amoghasiddhi* with human flesh, *Aksobhya* with urine, *Vairocana* with excrement (Wayman, 1973, p. 116).

The *Candamaharosana Tantra* lists with relish the particular substances which are offered to the adept by his wisdom consort during the sexual magic rituals and which he must swallow: excrement, urine, saliva, leftovers from between her teeth, lipstick, dish-water, vomit, the wash water which remains after her anus has been cleaned (George, 1974, pp. 73, 78, 79) Those who “make the excrement and urine their food, will be truly happy”, promises the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 134). In the *Hevajra Tantra* the adept must drink the menstrual blood of his *mudra* out of a skull bowl (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 98). But rotten fish, sewer water, canine feces, corpse fat, the excrement of the dead, sanitary napkins as well as all conceivable “intoxicating drinks” are also consumed (Walker, 1982, pp. 80–84).

There exists a strict commandment that the practicing yogi may not feel any disgust in consuming these impure substances. “One should never feel disgusted by excrement, urine, semen or blood” (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 266). Fundamentally, “he must eat and drink whatever he obtains and he should not hold any notions regarding likes and dislikes” (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 67).

But it is not just in the tantric rites, in Tibetan medicine as well all manner of human and animal excretions are employed for healing purposes. The excrement and urine of higher lamas are sought-after medicines. Processed into pills and offered for sale, they once played -and now play once more — a significant role in the business activities of Tibetan and exile-Tibetan monasteries. Naturally, the highest prices are paid for the excretions of the supreme hierarch, the Dalai Lama.

There is a report on the young Fourteenth god-king's sojourn in Beijing (in 1954) which recounts how His Holiness's excrement was collected daily in a golden pot in order to then be sent to Lhasa and processed into a medication there (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 22). Even if this source came from the Chinese camp, it can be given credence without further ado, since corresponding practices were common throughout the entire country.

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### The "feast on fæces fallacy"

As damtsig has come into contact with Western psychological materialism, self-defence tactics have taken a variety of forms. The one that has most intrigued me is what I have dubbed the "feast on fæces fallacy" - of which there appear to be two variations. I encountered the first during my introduction to Vajrayana at Vajradhatu Seminary - a three-month practice and study retreat designed by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. I attended this retreat after Trungpa Rinpoche's death, when his son, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, taught it. As the summer progressed and the teachings grew more challenging, speculation about samaya heated up. The speculation took on an odd repeating pattern. At some point in every conversation on the topic, someone would inevitably say, "I heard that samaya means that if the Sakyong tells you to eat shit, you have to do it." The conversation would then devolve into everyone deciding whether they would eat shit or not. After puzzling over it for a while, my eventual response to this statement was, "How likely is it that the Sakyong would ask you to eat shit?" The whole discussion was a scare tactic, however unconscious it may have been. It presented one with an extreme, *reductio ad absurdum* proposition from which one could quite justifiably turn away in disgust. In the process, it just so happened that one also cut oneself off from finding out what samaya actually *did* mean. That version of the Feast on Fæces Fallacy operates by the student scaring himself or herself away from damtsig.

The second variation on this theme operates to discredit the Lama with whom the student might make the vow. A good example of this was in a report on the first conference of Western Buddhist teachers with HH Dalai Lama in Dharamsala in 1993. At one of the conference sessions, Robert Thurman reportedly said that anyone who allowed himself or herself to be called a vajra master should be presented with a plate of excrement and a fork. If he or she was not capable of eating it, based on the principle of rochig (*ro gcig* - one taste), then he or she was a fraud and should take up knitting. This politically devious perspective is one which seeks to neuter every Lama who is not invested with the correct degree of current western adulation. Evidently a Lama who denies being a vajra master but who is nonetheless regarded as a vajra master is exempt from the offer of Robert Thurman's fæcal feast.

From: The "Feast on Fæces Fallacy" Or - how not to scare oneself away from liberation  
- by Nora Cameron in: <http://www.damtsig.org/articles/faeces.html>

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### Necrophilia

In a brilliant essay on Tantrism, the Mexican essayist and poet Octavio Paz drew attention to the fact that the great fondness of the Mexicans for skeletons and skulls could be found nowhere else in the world except in the Buddhist ritual practices of the Tibetans and Nepalese. The difference lies in the fact that in Mexico the death figures are regarded as a mockery of life and the living, whilst in Tantrism they are "horrific and obscene" (Paz, 1984, p. 94). This connection between death and sexuality is indeed a popular *leitmotiv* in Tibetan art. In scroll images the tantric couples are appropriately equipped with skull bowls and cleavers, wear necklaces of severed heads and trample around upon corpses whilst holding one another in the embrace of sexual union.

A general, indeed dominant necrophiliac strain in Tibetan culture cannot be overlooked. Fokke Sierksma's work includes a description of a meditation cell in which a lama had been immured. It was decorated with human hair, skin and bones, which were probably supplied by the dismemberers of corpses. Strung on a line were a number of dried female breasts. The eating bowl of the immured monk was not the usual human skull, but was also made from the cured skin of a woman's breast (Sierksma, 1966, p. 189).

Such macabre ambiances can be dismissed as marginal excesses, which is indeed what they are in the full sweep of Tibetan culture. But they nonetheless stand in a deep meaningful and symbolic connection with the paradoxical philosophy of Tantrism, of Buddhism in general even, which since its beginnings recommended as exercises meditation upon corpses in the various stages of decomposition in order to recognize the transience of all being. Alone the early Buddhist contempt for life, which locked the gateway to *nirvana*, is sufficient to understand the regular fascination with the morbid, the macabre and the decay of the body which characterizes Lamaism. Crematoria, charnel fields, cemeteries, funeral pyres, graves, but also places where a murder was carried out or a bloody battle was fought are considered, in accord with the "law of inversion", to be especially suitable locations for the performance of the tantric rites with a wisdom consort.

The sacred art of Tibet also revels in macabre subjects. In illustrations of the wrathful deities of the Tibetan pantheon, their hellish radiation is transferred to the landscape and the heavens and transform everything into a *nature morte* in the truest sense of the word. Black whirlwinds and greenish poisonous vapors sweep across infertile plains. Deep red rods of lightning flash through the night and rent clouds, ridden by witches, rage across a pitch black sky. Pieces of corpses are scattered everywhere, and are gnawed at by all manner of repulsive beasts of prey.

In order to explain the morbidity of Tibetan monastic culture, the Dutch cultural psychologist Fokke Sierksma makes reference to Sigmund Freud's concept of a "death wish" (*thanatos*). Interestingly, a comparison to Buddhism occurs to the famous psychoanalyst when describing the structure of the necrophiliac urge, which he attributes to, among other things, the "nirvana principle". This he understands to be a general desire for inactivity, rest, resolution, and death, which is claimed to be innate to all life. But in addition to this, since Freud, the death wish also exhibits a concrete sadistic and masochistic component. Both attitudes are expressions of aggression, the one directed outwards (sadism), the other directed inwardly (masochism).

### Ritual murder

The most aggressive form of the externalized death wish is murder. It remains as the final taboo violation within the tantric scheme to still be examined. The ritual killing of people to appease the gods is a sacred deed in many religions. In no sense do such ritual sacrifices belong to the past, rather they still play a role today, for example in the tantric *Kali* cults of India. Even children are

offered up to the cruel goddess on her bloody altars (*Time*, August 1997, p. 18). Among the Buddhist, in particular Tibetan, Tantrics such acts of violence are not so well-known. We must therefore very carefully pose the question of whether a ritual murder can here too be a part of the cult activity.

It is certain at least that all the texts of the Highest Tantra class verbally call for murder. The adept who seeks refuge in the Dhyani Buddha *Akshobya* meditates upon the various forms of hate up to and including aggressive killing. Of course, in this case too, a taboo violation is to be transformed in accordance with the “law of inversion” into its opposite, the attainment of eternal life. Thus, when the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* requires of the adept that “he should kill all sentient beings with this secret thunderbolt” (Wayman, 1977, p. 309), then — according to doctrine — this should occur so as to free them from suffering.

It is further seen as an honorable deed to “deliver” the world from people of whom a yogi knows that they will in future commit nasty crimes. Thus Padmasambhava, the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, in his childhood killed a boy whose future abominable deeds he foresaw.



***Maha Siddha Virupa and an impaled human***

But it is not just pure compassion or a transformatory intent which lies behind the already mentioned calls to murder in the tantras, above all not then when they are directed at the enemies of Buddhism. As, for example, in the rites of the *Hevajra Tantra*: “After having announced the intention to the guru and accomplished beings”, it says there, “perform with mercy the rite of killing of one who is a non-believer of the teachings of the Buddha and the detractors of the gurus and Buddhas. One should emanate such a person, visualizing his form as being upside-down, vomiting blood, trembling and with hair in disarray. Imagine a blazing needle entering his back. Then by envisioning the seed-syllable of the Fire element in his heart he is killed instantly” (quoted by Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 276). The *Guhyasamaja Tantra* also offers instructions on how to — as in voodoo magic — create images of the opponent and inflict “murderous” injuries upon these, which then actually occur in reality: “One draws a man or a woman in chalk or charcoal or similar. One projects an ax in the hand. Then one projects the way in which the throat is slit” (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 225). At another point the enemy is bewitched, poisoned, enslaved, or paralyzed. Corresponding sentences are to be found in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. There too the adept is urged to murder a being which has violated the Buddhist teachings. The text requires, however, that this be carried out with compassion (Dalai Lama XIV, 1985, p. 349).

The destruction of opponents via magical means is part of the basic training of any tantric adept. For example, we learn from the *Hevajra Tantra* a magic spell with the help of which all the soldiers of an enemy army can be decapitated at one stroke (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 30). There we can also find how to produce a blazing fever in the enemy's body and let it be vaporized (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 31). Such magical killing practices were — as we shall show — in no sense marginal to Tibetan religious history, rather they gained entry to the broad-scale politics of the Dalai Lamas.

The destructive rage does not even shy away from titans, gods, or Buddhas. In contrast, through the destruction of the highest beings the Tantric absorbs their power and becomes an arch-god. Even here things sometimes take a sadistic turn, as for example in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*, where the murder of a Buddha is demanded: “One douses him in blood, one douses him in water, one douses him in excrement and urine, one turns him over, stamps on his member, then one makes use of the King of Wrath. If this is completed eight hundred times then even a Buddha is certain to disintegrate” (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 219).

In order to effectively perform this Buddha murder, the yogi invokes an entire pandemonium, whose grotesque appearance could have been modeled on a work by Hieronymus Bosch: “He projects the threat of demons, manifold, raw, horrible, hardened by rage. Through this even the diamond bearer [the Highest Buddha] dies. He projects how he is eaten by owls, crows, by rutting vultures with long beaks. Thus even the Buddha is destroyed with certainty. A black snake, extremely brutish, which makes the fearful be afraid. ... It rears up, higher than the forehead. Consumed by this snake even the Buddha is destroyed with certainty. One lets the the perils and torments of all beings in the ten directions descend upon the enemy. This is the best. This is the supreme type of invocation” (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 230). This can be strengthened with the following aggressive mantra: “Om, throttle, throttle, stand, stand, bind, bind, slay, slay, burn, burn,

bellow, bellow, blast, blast the leader of all adversity, prince of the great horde, bring the life to an end" (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 230).

We encounter a particularly interesting murder fantasy in the deliberate staging of the Oedipus drama which a passage from the *Candamaharosana Tantra* requires. The adept should slay *Aksobhya*, his Buddha father, with a sword, give his mother, *Mamaki*, the flesh of the murdered father to eat and have sexual intercourse with her afterwards (George, 1974, p. 59; Filliozat, 1991, p. 430).

Within the spectrum of Buddhist/tantric killing practices, the deliberately staged "suicide" of the "sevenfold born" represents a specialty. We are dealing here with a person who has been reincarnated seven times and displays exceptional qualities of character. He speaks with a pleasant voice, observes with beautiful eyes and possesses a fine-smelling and glowing body which casts seven shadows. He never becomes angry and his mind is constantly filled with infinite compassion. Consuming the flesh of such a wonderful person has the greatest magical effects.

Hence, the Tantric should offer a "sevenfold born" veneration with flowers and ask him to act in the interests of all suffering beings. Thereupon — it says in the relevant texts — he will without hesitation surrender his own life. Afterwards pills are to be made from his flesh, the consumption of which grant among other things the *siddhis* (powers) of 'sky-walking'. Such pills are in fact still being distributed today. The heart-blood is especially sought after, and the skull of the killed blessed one also possesses magical powers (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 142).

When one considers the suicide request made to the "sevenfold born", the cynical structure of the tantric system becomes especially clear. His flesh is so yearned-for because he exhibits that innocence which the Tantric on account of his contamination with all the base elements of the world of appearances no longer possesses. The "sevenfold born" is the complete opposite of an adept, who has had dealings with the dark forces of the demonic. In order to transform himself through the blissful flesh of an innocent, the yogi requests such a one to deliberately sacrifice himself. And the higher being is so kind that it actually responds to this request and afterwards makes his dead body available for sacred consumption.

The mystery of the eucharist, in which the body and blood of Christ is divided among his believers springs so readily to mind that it is not impossible that the tantric consumption of a "sevenfold born" represents a Buddhist paraphrase of the Christian Last Supper. (The tantras appeared in the 4th century C.E. at the earliest.) But such self-sacrificial scenes can also be found already in *Mahayana* Buddhism. In the *Sutra of Perfected Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses* a description can be found of how the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita dismembers his own body in order to worship his teacher. Firstly he slits both his arms so that the blood pours out. Then he slices the flesh from his legs and finally breaks his own bones so as to be able to also offer the marrow as a gift.

Whatever opinion one has of such ecstatic acts of self-dismemberment, in *Mahayana* they always demonstrate the heroic deed of an ethically superior being who wishes to help others. In contrast, the cynical sacrifice of the “sevenfold born” demonstrates the exploitation of a noble and selfless sentiment to serve the power interests of the Tantric. In the face of such base motives, the Tibet researcher David Snellgrove with some justification doubts the sevenfold incarnated’s imputed preparedness to be sacrificed: “Did one track him down and wait for him to die or did one hasten the process? All these tantras give so many fierce rites with the object of slaying, that the second alternative might not seem unlikely ...” (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 161).

### Symbol and reality

Taking Snellgrove's suspicion as our starting point, the question arises as to whether the ritual murder of a person is intended to be real or just symbolic in the tantric scripts. Among Western interpreters of the tantras opinions are divided. Early researchers such as Austine Waddell or Albert Grünwedel presumed a literal interpretation of the rituals described in the texts and were dismayed by them. Among contemporary authors, especially those who are themselves Buddhists, the “crimes” of *Vajrayana* are usually played down as allegorical metaphors, as Michael M. Broido or Anagarika Govinda do in their publications, for example. This toned-down point of view is, for readily understandable reasons, today thankfully adopted by Tibetan lamas teaching everywhere in the Western world. It liberates the gurus from tiresome confrontations with the ethical norms of the cultures in which they have settled after their flight from Tibet. They too now see themselves called to transform the offensive shady sides of the tantras into friendly bright sides: “Human flesh” for example is to be understood as referring to the own imperfect self which the yogi “consumes” in a figurative sense through his sacred practices. “To kill” means to rob dualistic thought patterns of their life in order to recreate the original unity with the universe, and so forth. But despite such euphemisms an unpleasant taste remains, since the statements of the tantras are so unequivocal and clear.

It is at any rate a fact that the entire tantric ritual schema does not get by without dead body parts and makes generous use of them. The sacred objects employed consist of human organs, flesh, and bones. Normally these are found at and collected from the public crematoria in India or the charnel fields of Tibet.

But there are indications which must be taken seriously that up until this century Tibetans have had to surrender their lives for ritualistic reasons. The (fourteenth-century) *Blue Annals*, a seminal document in the history of Tibetan Buddhism, already reports upon how in Tibet the so-called “18 robber-monks” slaughtered men and women for their tantric ceremonies (*Blue Annals*, 1995, p. 697). The Englishman Sir Charles Bell visited a stupa on the Bhutan-Tibet border in which the ritually killed body of an eight-year-old boy and a girl of the same age were found (Bell, 1927, p. 80). Attestations of human sacrifice in the Himalayas recorded by the American anthropologist Robert Ekvall date from the 1950s (Ekvall, 1964, pp. 165–166, 169, 172).

In their criticism of lamaism, the Chinese make frequent and emphatic reference to such ritual killing practices, which were still widespread at the time of the so-called “liberation” of the country, that is until the end of the 1950s. According to them, in the year 1948 21 individuals were murdered by state sacrificial priests from Lhasa as part of a ritual of enemy destruction, because their organs were required as magical ingredients (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 29). Rather than dismissing such statements in advance as evil communist propaganda, the original spirit of the tantra texts would seem to afford that they be investigated conscientiously and without prejudice.

The morbid ritual objects on display in the *Tibetan Revolutions Museum* established by the Chinese in Lhasa, certainly teach us something about horror: prepared skulls, mummified hands, rosaries made of human bones, ten trumpets made from the thigh bones of 16-year-old girls, and so on. Among the museum’s exhibits is also a document which bears the seal of the (Thirteenth or Fourteenth?) Dalai Lama in which he demands the contribution of human heads, blood, flesh, fat, intestines, and right hands, likewise the skins of children, the menstrual blood of a widow, and stones with which human skulls had been staved in, for the “strengthening of holy order” (Epstein, 1983, p.138). Further, a small parcel of severed and prepared male sexual organs which are needed to conduct certain rituals can also be seen there, as well as the charred body of a young woman who was burned as a witch. If the tantra texts did not themselves mention such macabre requisites, it would never occur to one to take this demonstration of religious violence seriously.

That the Chinese with their accusations of tantric excesses cannot be all that false, is demonstrated by the relatively recent brutal murder of three lamas, which deeply shook the exile-Tibetan community in Dharamsala. On 4 February 1997, the murdered bodies of the 70-year-old lama Lobsang Gyatso, head of the Buddhist-dialectical school, and two of his pupils were found just a few yards from the residence of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. The murderers had repeatedly stabbed their victims with a knife, had slit their throats and according to press reports had partially skinned their corpses (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1997, no. 158, p. 10). All the observers and commentators on the case were of the unanimous opinion that this was a case of ritual murder. In the second part of our analysis we examine in detail the real and symbolic background and political implications of the events of 4 February.

At any rate, the supreme demands which a yogi must make of himself in order to expose a “crime” which he “really” commits as an illusion speaks for the likelihood of the actual staging of a killing during a tantric ritual. In the final instance the conception that everything is only an illusion and has no independent existence leads to an indifference as to whether a murder is real or “just” allegorical. From this point of view everything in the world of *Vajrayana* is both “real” and “symbolic”. “We touch symbols, when we think we are touching bodies and material objects”, writes Octavio Paz with regard to Tantrism, “And vice versa: according to the law of reversibility all symbols are real and touchable, ideas and even nothingness has a taste. It makes no difference whether the crime is real or symbolic: Reality and symbol fuse, and in fusing they dissolve” (Paz, 1984, pp. 91–92).

## Concurrence with the demonic

The excesses of Tantrism are legitimated by the claim that the yogi is capable of transforming evil into good via his spiritual techniques. This inordinate attempt nonetheless give rise to apprehensions as to whether the adept does in fact have the strength to resist all the temptations of the “devil”? Indeed, the “law of inversion” always leads in the first phase to a “concurrence with the demonic” and regards contact with the “devil” as a proper admission test for the path of enlightenment. No other current in any of the world religions thus ranks the demons and their retinue so highly as in *Vajrayana*.

The image packed iconography of Tibet literally teems with terrible deities (*herukas*) and red henchmen. When one dares, one’s gaze is met by disfigured faces, hate-filled grimaces, bloodshot eyes, protruding canines. Twisted sneers leave one trembling — at once both terrible and wonderful, as in an oriental fairy-tale. Surrounded by ravens and owls, embraced by snakes and animal skins, the male and female monster gods carry battle-axes, swords, pikes and other murderous cult symbols in their hands, ready at any moment to cut their opponent into a thousand pieces.

The so-called “books of the dead” and other ritual text are also storehouses for all manner of zombies, people-eaters, ghosts, ghouls, furies and fiends. In the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* the concurrence of the Buddhas with the demonic and evil is elevated to an explicit part of the program: “They constantly eat blood and scraps of flesh ... They drink treachery like milk ... skulls, bones, smokehouses, oil and fat bring great joy” (quoted by Gäng, 1988, pp. 259–260). In this document the Buddhist gods give free rein to their aggressive destructive fantasies: “Hack to pieces, hack to pieces, sever, sever, strike, strike, burn, burn” they urge the initiands with furious voices (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 220). One could almost believe oneself to be confronted with primordial chaos. Such horror visions are not just encountered by the tantric adept. They also, in Tibetan Buddhist tradition, appear to every normal person, sometimes during a lifetime on earth, but after death inevitably. Upon dying every deceased person must, unless he is already enlightened, progress through a limbo (*Bardo*) in which bands of devils sadistically torment him and attempt to pull the wool over his eyes. As in the Christian Middle Ages, the Tibetan monks’ fantasies also revel in unbearable images of hell. It is said that not even a Bodhisattva is permitted to help a person out of the hell of *Vajra* (Trungpa, 1992, p. 68).

Here too we would like to come up with a lengthier description, in order to draw attention to the anachronistic-excruciating world view of Tantric Buddhism: “The souls are boiled in great cauldrons, inserted into iron caskets surrounded by flames, plunge into icy water and caves of ice, wade through rivers of fire or swamps filled with poisonous adders. Some are sawed to pieces by demonic henchmen, others plucked at with glowing tongs, gnawed by vermin, or wander lost through a forest with a foliage of razor sharp daggers and swords. The tongues of those who blasphemed against the teaching grow as big as a field and the devils plow upon them. The hypocrites are crushed beneath huge loads of holy books and towering piles of relics” (Bleichsteiner, 1937, p. 224). There are a total of 18 different hells, one more dreadful than the next. Above all, the most brutal punishments are reserved for those “sinners” who have

contravened the rules of *Vajrayana*. They can wait for their “head and heart [to] burst” (Henss, 1985, p. 46).

A glance at old Tibetan criminal law reveals that such visions of fear and horror also achieved some access to social reality. Its methods of torture and devious forms of punishment were in no way inferior to the Chinese cruelties now denounced everywhere: for example, both hands of thieves were mutilated by being locked into salt-filled leather pouches. The amputation of limbs and bloody floggings on the public squares of Lhasa, deliberately staged freezing to death, shackling, the fitting of a yoke and many other “medieval” torments were to be found in the penal code until well into the 20th century. Western travelers report with horror and loathing of the dark and damp dungeons of the Potala, the official residence of the Dalai Lamas.

This clear familiarity with the spectacle of hell in a religion which bears the banners of love and kindness, peace and compassion is shocking for an outsider. It is only the paradoxicalness of the tantras and the *Madhyamika* philosophy (the doctrine of the ‘emptiness’ of all being) which allows the rapid interplay between heaven and hell which characterizes Tibetan culture. Every lama will answer that, “since everything is pure illusion, that must also be the case for the world of demons”, should one ask him about the devilish ghosts. He will indicate that it is the ethical task of Buddhism to free people from this world of horrors. But only when one has courageously looked the demon in the eye, can he be exposed as illusory or as a ghostly figure thrown up by one’s own consciousness.

Nevertheless, that the obsessive and continuous preoccupation with the terrible is motivated by such therapeutic intentions and philosophical speculations is difficult to comprehend. The demonic is accorded a disturbingly high intrinsic value in Tibetan culture, which influences all social spheres and possesses a seamless tradition. When Padmasambhava converted Tibet to Buddhism in the eighth century, the sagas recount that he was opposed by numerous native male and female devils, against all of whom he was victorious thanks to his skills in magic. But despite his victory he never killed them, and instead forced them to swear to serve Buddhism as protective spirits (*dharmapalas*) in future.

Why, we have to ask ourselves, was this horde of demons snorting with rage not transformed via the tantric “law of inversion” into a collection of peace-loving and graceful beings? Would it not have been sensible for them to have abandoned their aggressive character in order to lead a peaceful and dispassionate life in the manner of the Buddha Shakyamuni? The opposite was the case — the newly “acquired” Buddhist protective gods (*dharmapalas*) had not just the chance but also the duty to live out their innate aggressiveness to the full. This was even multiplied, but was no longer directed at orthodox Buddhists and instead acted to crush the “enemies of the teaching”. The atavistic pandemonium of the pre-Buddhist Land of Snows survived as a powerful faction within the tantric pantheon and, since horror in general exercises a greater power of fascination than a “boring” vision of peace, deeply determined Tibetan cultural life.

Many Tibetans — among them, as we shall later see, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama — still believe themselves to be constantly threatened by demonic powers, and are kept busy holding back the dark forces with the help of magic, supplicatory prayers, and liturgical techniques, but also recruiting them for their own ends, all of which incidentally provides a considerable source of income for the professional exorcists among the lamas. Directly alongside this underworldly abyss — at least in the imagination — a mystic citadel of pure peace and eternal rest rises up, of which there is much talk in the sacred writings. Both visions — that of horror and that of bliss — complement one another and are in Tantrism linked in a “theological” causal relationship which says that heaven may only be entered after one has journeyed through hell.

In his psychoanalytical study of Tibetan culture, Fokke Sierksma conjectures that the chronic fear of demonic attacks was spread by the lamas to help maintain their power and, further to this, is blended with a sadomasochistic delight in the macabre and aggressive. The enjoyment of cruelty widespread among the monks is legitimated by, among other things, the fact that — as can be read in the tantra texts — even the Highest Buddhas can assume the forms of cruel gods (*herukas*) to then, bellowing and full of hate, smash everything to pieces.

These days a smile is raised by the observations of the Briton Austine Waddells, who, in his famous book published in 1899, *The Buddhism in Tibet*, drew attention to the general fear which then dominated every aspect of religious life in Tibet: “The priests must be constantly called in to appease the menacing devils, whose ravenous appetite is only sharpened by the food given to stay it” (quoted by Sierksma, 1966, p. 164). However, Waddell’s images of horror were confirmed a number of decades later by the Tibetologist Guiseppe Tucci, whose scholarly credibility cannot be doubted: “The entire spiritual life of the Tibetans”, Tucci writes, “is defined by a permanent attitude of defense, by a constant effort to appease and propitiate the powers whom he fears” (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 26).

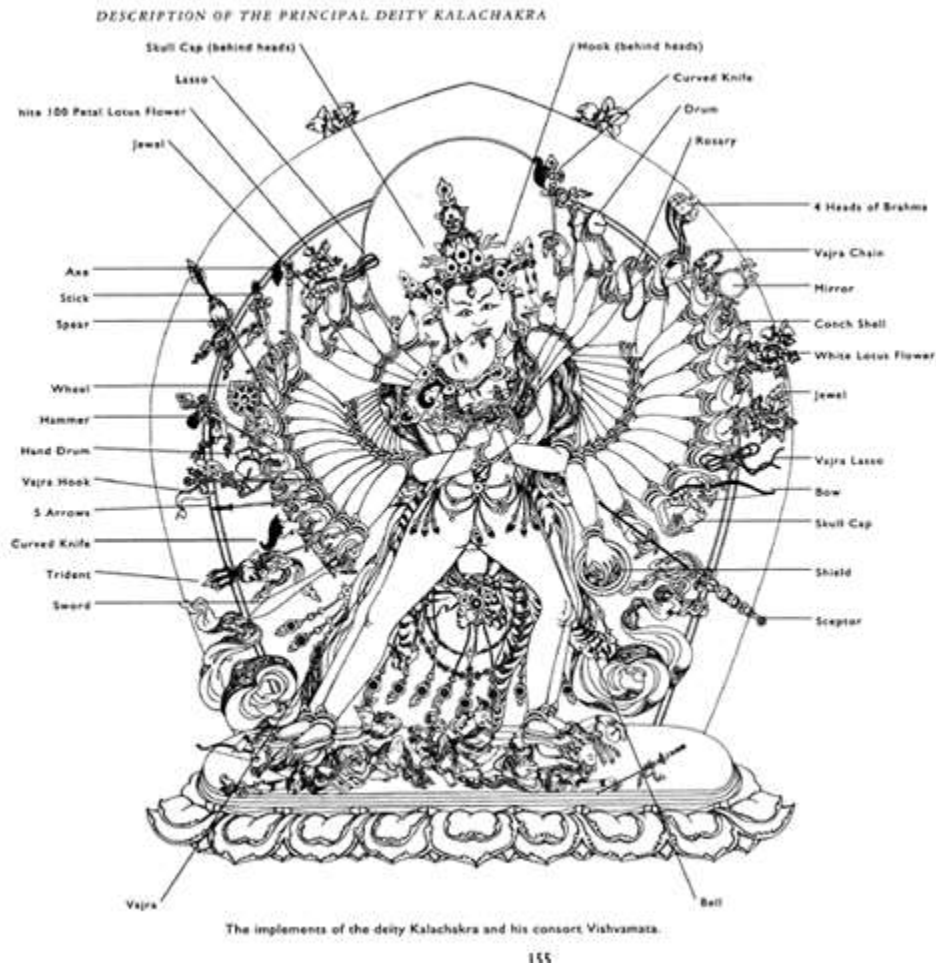
There is no need for us to rely solely on Western interpreters in order to demonstrate Tantrism’s demonic orientation; rather we can form an impression for ourselves. Even a fleeting examination of the violent tantric iconography confirms that horror is a determining element of the doctrine. Why do the “divine” demons on the thangkas only very seldom take to the field against one another but rather almost exclusively mow down men, women, and children? What motivates the “peace-loving” Dalai Lama to choose as his principal protective goddess a maniacal woman by the name of *Palden Lhamo*, who rides day and night through a boiling sea of blood? The fearsome goddess is seated upon a saddle which she herself personally crafted from the skin of her own son. She murdered him in cold blood because he refused to follow in the footsteps of his converted mother and become a Buddhist. Why — we must also ask ourselves — has the militant war god *Begtse* been so highly revered for centuries in the Tibetan monasteries of all sects?

One might believe that this “familiarity with the demonic” would by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have changed among the exile Tibetans, who are praised for their “open-mindedness”. Unfortunately, many events of which we come to speak of in the second part of our study, but most especially the recent and already mentioned ritual murders of 4 February 1997 in Dharamsala, illustrate that the gates of hell are by no means bolted shut. According to reports so far, the perpetrators were acting on behalf of the aggressive protective spirit, *Dorje Shugden*. Even the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has attributed to this *dharmapala* (protective deity) the power to threaten his life and to bewitch him by magical means.

If horror is acceptable, then death is cheap. It is true that in Tantrism death is considered to be a state of consciousness which can be surmounted, but in Tibetan culture (which also incorporates non-tantric elements) like the demons it has also achieved a thriving “life of its own” and enjoys general cult worship. There — as we shall often come to show — it stands at the center of numerous macabre rites. Sigmund Freud’s problematic formulation, that “the goal of all life is death” can in our view be prefaced to Lamaism as its *leitmotiv*.

### The aggression of the divine couple

Does this iconography of horror also apply to the divine couple who are worshipped at the heart of the tantric rituals? On the basis of the already described apotheosis of mystic sexual love as the suspension of all opposites, as a creative polarity, as the origin of language, the gods, time, of compassion, emptiness, and of the white light we ought to assume that the primal couple radiate peace, harmony, concord, and joy. In fact there are such blissful illustrations of the love of god and goddess in Tantrism. In this connection the primal Buddha, *Samantabhadra*, highly revered in the Nyingmapa school, deserves special mention; naked he sits in the meditative posture without any ritual objects in his hands, embracing his similarly unclothed partner, *Samantabhadri*. This pure nakedness of the loving couple demonstrates a powerful vision, which breaks through the otherwise usual patriarchal relation of dominance which prevails between the sexes. All other images of the Buddhas with their consorts express an androcentric gesture of dominance through the symbolic objects assigned to them. [1]



### ***The implements of the deity Kalachakra and his consort Vishvamata***

Peaceful images of the divine couple are, however, exceptional within the Highest Tantras and in no way the rule. The majority of the *yab-yum* representations are of the *Heruka* type, that is, they show couples in furious, destructive and violent positions. Above all the Buddha *Hevajra* and his consort *Nairatmya*. Surrounded by eight “burning” dakinis he performs a bizarre dance of hell and is so intoxicated by his killing instinct that he holds a skull bowl in each of his sixteen hands, in which gods, humans, and animals are to be found as victims. In her right hand *Nairatmya* threateningly swings a cleaver. *Raktiamari*, *Yamantaka*, *Cakrasamvara*, *Vajrakila* or whatever names the clusters of pairs from the other tantras may have, all of them exhibit the same striking mixture of aggressiveness, thanatos, and erotic love.

Likewise, the time god, *Kalachakra*, is of the heruka type. His wildness is underlined by his vampire-like canines and his hair which stands on end. The tiger pelt draped around his hips also signalizes his aggressive character. Two of his four faces are not peaceful, but instead express greed and wrath. But above all his destructive attitude is emphasized by the symbols which the “Lord of Time” holds in his twenty-four hands. Of these, six are of a peaceful nature and eighteen

are warlike. Among the latter are the *vajra*, *vajra* hook, sword, trident, cleaver, *damaru* (a drum made from two skull bowls), *kapala* (a vessel made out of a human skull), *khatvanga* (a type of scepter, the tip of which is decorated with three severed human heads), ax, discus, switch, shield, *ankusha* (elephant hook), arrow, bow, sling, prayer beads made from human bones as well as the severed heads of *Brahma*. The peaceable symbols are: a jewel, lotus, white conch shell, *triratna* (triple jewel), and fire, so long it is not used destructively. Finally, there is the bell.

His consort, *Vishvamata*, also fails to make a pacifist impression. Of the eight symbolic objects which she holds in her eight hands, six are aggressive or morbid, and only two, the lotus and the triple jewel, signify happiness and well-being. Among her magical defense weapons are the cleaver, *vajra* hook, a drum made from human skulls, skull bowls filled with hot blood, and prayer beads made out of human bones. To signalize that she is under the control of the androcentric principle, each of her four heads bears a crown consisting of a small figure who represents the male Dhyani Buddha, *Vajrasattva*. As far as the facial expressions of the time goddess can be deciphered, above all they express sexual greed.

Both principal deities, *Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata*, stand joined in union in the so-called at-ease stance, which is supposed to indicate their preparedness for battle and willingness to attack. The foundation is composed of four cushions. Two of these symbolize the sun and moon, the other two the imaginary planets, *Rahu* and *Kalagni*. *Rahu* is believed to swallow both of the former heavenly bodies and plays a role within the *Kalachakra* rituals which is just as prominent as that of *Kalagni*, the apocalyptic fire which destroys the world with flame. The two planets thus have an extremely aggressive and destructive nature. Beneath the feet of the time couple two Hindu gods are typically shown being trampled, the red love god *Kama* and the white terror god *Rudra*. Their two partners, *Rati* and *Uma*, try in vain to rescue them.

Consequently, the entire scenario of the *Kalachakra Tantra* is warlike, provocative, morbid, and hot-tempered. In examining its iconography, one constantly has the feeling of being witness to a massacre. It is no help against this when the many commentaries stress again and again that aggressive ritual objects, combative body postures, expressions of rage, and wrathful deeds are necessary in order to surmount obstacles which block the individual's path to enlightenment. Nor, in light of the pathological compulsiveness with which the Tantric attempts to drive out horror with horror, is the affirmation convincing, that Buddha's wrath is compensated for by Buddha's love and that all this cruelty is for the benefit of all suffering beings.

The aggressiveness of both partners in the tantras remains a puzzle. To our knowledge it is not openly discussed anywhere, but rather accepted mutely. In the Highest Tantras we can all but assume the principle that the loving couple as the wrathful- warlike and turbulent element finds its counterpoint in a peaceful and unmoving Buddha in meditative posture. In the light of this tantric iconography one has the impression that the *vajra* master prefers a hot and aggressive sexuality with which to effect the transformation of erotic love into power. Perhaps the Dutch psychologist, Fokke Sierksma, did not lie so wide of the mark when he described the tantric

performance as “sadomasochistic”, whereby the sadistic role is primarily played by the man, whilst the woman exhibits both compulsions together. At any rate, the energy set free by “hot sex” appears to be an especially sought-after substance for the yogis’ “alchemic” transformative games, which we will come to examine in more detail later in the course of our study.

The poetry and beauty of mystic sexual love is far more often (even if not at all consistently) expressed in the words of the Highest Tantra texts, than in the visual representations of a morbid tantric eroticism. This does not fit together somehow. Since at the end of the sexual magic rituals the masculine principle alone remains, the verbal praise of the goddess, beauty and love could also be manipulative, designed to conjure up the devotion of a woman. Bearing in mind that the method (*upaya*) of the yogis can also be translated as “trick”, we may not exclude such a possibility.

### Western criticism

In the light of the unconcealed potential for violence and manifest obsessions with power within Tantric Buddhism it is incomprehensible that the idea has spread, even among many Western authors and a huge public too, that *Vajrayana* is a religious practice which exclusively promotes peace. This seems all the more misled since the whole system in no way denies its own destructiveness and draws its entire power from the exploitation of extremes. In the face of such inconsistencies, some keen interpreters of the tantras project the violent Buddhist fantasies outwards, by making Hinduism and the West responsible for aggression and hunger for power.

For example, the Tibetologist of German origins, Herbert Guenther (born 1917), who has been engaged in an attempt to win philosophical respectability for *Vajrayana* in Europe and America since the 60s, sharply attacks the Western and Hindu cultures: “this purely Hinduistic power mentality, so similar to the Western dominance psychology, was generalized and applied to all forms of Tantrism by writers who did not see or, due to their being steeped so much in dominance psychology, could not understand that the desire to realize Being is not the same as the craving for power” (Guenther, 1976, p. 64). The sacred eroticism of Buddhism is completely misunderstood in the west and interpreted as sexual pleasure and exploitation. “The use of sexuality as a tool of power destroys its function”, this author tells us and continues, “Buddhist Tantrism dispenses with the idea of power, in which it sees a remnant of subjectivistic philosophy, and even goes beyond mere pleasure to the enjoyment of being and of enlightenment unattainable without woman” (Guenther, 1976, 66).

Anagarika Govinda (1898-1985), also a German converted to Buddhism whose original name was Ernst Lothar Hoffmann and who believed himself to be a reincarnation of the German romantic Novalis, made even greater efforts to deny a claim to power in Tibetan Buddhism. He even attempted, with — when one considers the print run of his books — obviously great success, to cleanse *Vajrayana* of its sacred sexuality and present it as a pure, spiritual school of wisdom.

Govinda also gives the Hindus the blame for everything bad about the tantras. *Shakti* — the German lama says — mean power. “United with *Shakti*, be full of power!”, it says in a Hindu tantra (Govinda, 1984, p. 106). “The concept of *Shakti*, of divine power,” — the author continues — “plays absolutely no role in Buddhism. Whilst in tantric Hinduism the concept of power lies at the center of concern” (Govinda, 1984, p. 105). Further, we are told, the Tibetan yogi is free of all sexual and power fantasies. He attains union exclusively with the “eternal feminine”, the symbol for “emotion, love, heart, and compassion”. “In this state there is no longer anything ‘sexual’ in the time-honored sense of the word ...” (Govinda, 1984, p. 111).

Yet the feminist critique of *Vajrayana*, which Miranda Shaw presented in her book on “Women in Tantric Buddhism” published in 1994, appears even more odd. With reference to Herbert Guenther she also judges the interpretation of authors who reveal Tantrism to be a sexual and spiritual exploitation of the woman, to be a maneuver of “western dominance psychology”. These “androcentric” scholars reiterate a prejudice embedded deeply within western culture, which says that men are always active, women in contrast passive victims; men are power conscious, women are powerless; men are molded by intellect, women by emotion. It was suggested that women did not possess the capacity to practice tantric Yoga (Shaw, 1994, p. 9).

It is no surprise that the “militant Tantric” Miranda Shaw argues thus, then from the first to the last line of her committed book she tries to bring the proof that women were in no way inferior to the great gurus and *Maha Siddhas*. The apparently meager number of “yoginis” to be found in the history of *Vajrayana*, compared that is to the literally countless assembly of tantric masters, are built up by the author into a spiritual, female super-elite. The women from the founding phase of Tantrism — we learn here — did not just work together with their male partners as equals, rather they were far superior to them in their knowledge of mysteries. They are the actual “masters” and Tantric Buddhism owes its very existence to them. This radical feminist attempt to interpret Tantrism as an originally matriarchal cult event, is however, not entirely unjustified. Let us briefly trace its footsteps.

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### Footnotes:

[1] In the usual *yab–yum* representation of the Dhyani Buddhas, the male Buddha figure always crosses both of his arms behind the back of his wisdom consort, forming what is known as the *Vajrahumkara* gesture. At the same time he holds a *vajra* (the supreme symbol of masculinity) in his right hand, and a *gantha* (the supreme symbol of femininity) in his left. The symbolic possession of both ritual objects identifies him as the lord of both sexes. He is the androgyne and the *prajna* is a part of his self.

# Kundalini - The Secret of Yoga

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## **Introduction**

There are few subjects relating to spiritual development so critically important and yet so incompletely understood as Yoga. Although the interest in Yoga that started in the West during the 1960's has abated to some degree, the teaching of the various forms of the discipline has become well-established. In many cases, those who practise Yoga as it is generally taught in the West do so primarily as a means to improve health, reduce stress or maintain physical fitness.

The other aspect of Yoga given much attention is the control over the physical body that can be gained by long practice of its physical disciplines. Sensational accounts of yogis who can perform amazing feats of bodily control, such as suspension of breathing for extended periods of time, conscious control of the heartbeat and the ability to increase body heat in freezing temperatures get wide publicity. There are stories of yogis who can fly, live to an advanced age or perform amazing psychic feats. Although these stories are, for the most part, never properly verified, the general impression exists, both in the East and West, that Yoga can bestow magical or occult powers on those who learn its deepest secrets.

But, as Gopi Krishna points out, there is much more to Yoga than its benefits to health, control over the body and potential for developing paranormal abilities. The significance of Yoga, and the purpose for which the discipline as a whole was really designed, lies in its potential for enabling the practitioner to actually experience expanded states of consciousness and

to verify the existence of levels of creation other than the one we perceive with our material senses. The other benefits are minor when compared with the real goal.

Part of the reason for this lack of understanding is that in the West, Yoga is rarely presented in its complete form. Aspects of the disciplines which are critical to achieve real success, i.e., a balanced lifestyle, self-discipline and control of the senses, are not always emphasized, or if emphasized, they are not followed. Because the primary goal of Yoga is understood in such a limited way, few people who take up the discipline are willing to make the effort essential to real success and the potential for attaining highly enhanced states of perception remains largely untapped.

Another important aspect of Yoga is that if Kundalini, which Gopi Krishna claims is at the heart of the discipline, is the energy responsible for spiritual experience and mystical states of consciousness, then two logical conclusions can be drawn: 1) all religious experience owes its origin to this source and 2) the systematized discipline of Yoga corroborates the basic beliefs of religion which heretofore could only be accepted on faith. They are verifiable by personal experience. So, Yoga can provide a method that alleviates the discord and rivalry that exists between the adherents of the major faiths and also a foundation for the development of a more broadly-based scientific method that could reduce the long-standing conflict between science and religion.

Another reason for the need to properly study and understand Yoga is the occurrence of what is currently known as 'Spiritual Emergence.' This term is generally used to describe a set of physical and psychological symptoms which are experienced for varying periods of time and, if handled in a proper way, can result in enhanced levels of awareness, creativity and mental well-being. But some of the symptoms experienced in these cases resemble common forms of psychosis, and treatments done on this basis can be detrimental both to the process and to the mental and physical health of the individual.

For those who approach these processes with an open mind and who attempt to help the people who experience them there can be no doubt about the reality of the suffering that many of them endure, often unnecessarily. But until the physiological basis for this condition is actually determined and understood, it will not be possible to make substantial progress either in helping the people suffering from severe problems related to these processes or in making Spiritual Emergence a valid and accepted branch of medical study.

(iii)

## INTRODUCTION

It was Gopi Krishna's belief that the only way to establish the reality of spiritual experience on a firm scientific basis is to conduct research into the biological factors that are responsible for it. The discipline of Yoga, with its systematized and highly developed methods for enhancing the processes that lead to higher levels of consciousness, is the natural centre around which this research can proceed.

Although not a Yoga teacher by profession, Gopi Krishna's more than 45 years of experience with the effects of a fully awakened Kundalini and the thorough research of the subject done during his lifetime gave him the insight and knowledge necessary for the understanding of this vast subject. The meticulous study of his own condition and the information that he gathered can be of invaluable help in undertaking a project of this kind.

If his theories about the nature of spiritual experience are verified by the research that he recommended, it will bring about a revolution in our understanding of the human condition and of the goal towards which the human race is currently evolving.

Michael Bradford

# 1

## **The Aim of Yoga**

The great interest evinced in Yoga and other occult doctrines by a large number of people, both in the East and in the West, is a clear indication of a growing thirst in men to know more about themselves, their birth and death, the real nature of the conscious principle animating them, and about the mystery surrounding the universe. There is nothing new in the expression of this impulse. It has been present in various forms from the day man began to lead the life of a rational being, from the day he began to use stone implements, of the crudest type, and to live a family and social life of the most primitive kind. That the thirst has always been present in one form or another is corroborated by the earliest relics of primitive men found in different parts of the earth. Undoubtedly there is a difference in the intensity of its expression and the form of its manifestation, but that the thirst has not abated is clear beyond the least shadow of doubt.

There appears to be a misconception in the minds of some people that Yoga offers an easy and convenient method for gaining access to the occult. This notion is especially prevalent in the West, and the idea persists that there are secret practices which can work wonders in leading men to the realm of the spirit. Such a conception is not peculiar to this era alone, but, in various

forms, has been present from the remote past, ever since primitive man began to experiment with different methods to gain psychic powers, to invoke spirits and ghosts, to practice the art of magical healing, or to trade in sorcery and witchcraft. The men who practiced or professed these arts were always a source of wonder and attraction to novices desirous of attaining similar powers. The idea underlying this belief, which persists to this day, suggests that there are latent possibilities in the human mind which, when developed through appropriate methods, can place at the command of an adept unseen, intelligent forces of nature which enable him to perform extraordinary feats utterly beyond the capacity of normal men. How far this concept is based on reality and how far it is a myth is the aim of this work to expound.

Properly speaking, Yoga is an adjunct to religion and has always been treated as such in India, the country of its birth. The word Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, which means to yoke or join. As such, Yoga signifies the union of the individual soul with universal Consciousness or, in the language of the Upanishads, with the uncreated, all-pervading Brahman. In other words, the spiritual practices, classified under the general name Yoga, constitute different methods for the attainment of spiritual objectives, for verifying the doctrines formulated by prophets and sages, and for experiencing the Transcendent. Yoga is not something different or divorced from religion. It is the experimental part of it, offering ways and means to the properly qualified aspirants, prepared to undergo the discipline and to follow the methods suggested, to prove for themselves the validity of religious doctrines and the results attained by those who successfully pursued the path prescribed.

Yoga, as the empirical part of religion, is especially valuable in this age of reason as the growing intellect of the race demands some proof for the existence of the Transcendent Reality within the universe. Unless and until this proof is forthcoming, even in a subjective form, it will be increasingly difficult to reconcile the intellect with the existing dogmas of religion and agnosticism

will continue to take a heavy toll from the ranks of scholars and men of science. From earliest times Yoga has provided the answer to the agnostic and the atheist in India. To the question, Can you prove the existence of a reality within the world of phenomena? the answer has been Yes. How? The answer, practice Yoga and see for yourself. It should not be supposed that India has not had its share of highly intelligent and vociferous skeptics and atheists. They existed even before the birth of Buddha in the sixth century before Christ, and under various guises have continued to spread their subversive doctrines to this day. Nevertheless, it is true that in spite of their opposition, Yoga continued to thrive and to be the chief instrument of realization for almost all the innumerable and, sometimes, mutually contending creeds and sects in India, thereby providing strong evidence of its vitality as well as its efficacy and popularity even under difficult conditions.

The validity of Yoga in its various forms as a tested method for gaining spiritual experience has never been doubted. On the other hand, the doctrine has remained surrounded by a halo that has continued undiminished to this day. Such a halo and such veneration, as Yoga now commands even in India, could never have been possible if from time to time its roots had not been watered by men of outstanding genius who brilliantly proved for themselves and others the possibility of the supreme achievement claimed for it. Because there exists a galaxy of extraordinary spiritual luminaries behind it, Yoga has been able to survive the onslaught of centuries and continues to this day to excite the curiosity and command the admiration of legions who accept it. There is ample evidence to show that the various methods used in Yoga were in vogue in India even in the Vedic age, long before the birth of Patanjali, the renowned author of Yoga-Sutras. To this great savant of the past, however, goes the credit for gathering the scattered threads of this hoary cult and formulating it, for the first time, into a methodological system of scientific experimentation and philosophy.

Divested of the superstition and myth that surround all reli-

gions, Yoga contains absolutely nothing that can be abhorrent to any faith or creed. On the other hand, it uses most of the methods advocated by the founders of great religions, mystics, and sages as a means to God-consciousness and to render the body a fit vehicle for spiritual illumination. Despite popular belief to the contrary, Yoga has never been considered to be a shortcut to self-realization. Although some writers on Yoga, even in the past, have claimed extraordinary efficacy for their particular method, the fact remains that this ancient system has never been considered as a means of easy approach to the Divine. On the contrary, all those who diligently pursued it did so with full realization that they were taking up a most serious quest and that they would be fortunate indeed if they attained some measure of success in it in their lifetime.

How seriously the quest is taken in India is, to some extent, evidenced by the large number of men who leave their homes and families to live in seclusion or in the company of masters to follow this path. Their number runs into millions. Apart from them, millions of men in different walks of life in India make Yoga an integral part of their lives, devoting to it all the time and energy they can spare, and even neglecting their worldly ambitions to achieve success in this enterprise. The life of most of these men is one great sacrifice to this holy quest. They have no delusions about the fact that they have entered upon an arduous undertaking, and have to submit completely to all the disciplines enjoined. They know that the prerequisites for an earnest study and practice of this venerable system are a recognition of this important fact, a readiness to make the sacrifice; and last, but not the least, to make it a permanent, integral part of one's life. The present sundry misconceptions about Yoga, treating it as a treasure house of easy-to-follow secret methods to experience the vision, Reality, or the psychic powers are entirely unfounded and often end in a painful harvest of disillusionment and frustration.

Many of the disciplines and practices of Yoga are common to

all great religions of mankind or, at least, to their esoteric aspects. The main difference is that in Yoga they have been brought into a methodological system divested of other ritual. This gives to Yoga the semblance of an independent cult. The word yoga is met for the first time in Vedas in the Katha Upanishad and some description of it is contained in Svetasvatra, the last of the early Upanishads. It is more frequently met with in Puranas, the epics and other later literature, and is sometimes synonymously used for *tapa* and *dhyana* (i.e., religious austerity and meditation). Basically Yoga is nothing more or less than systematized concentration. Fixity of attention, whether on a God or a goddess, on a symbol or a diagram, on the void or any material object, or whether on a *mantra* or any particular region of the body, is the main exercise of every ancient form of Yoga. It is at the same time the invariably met cornerstone of every religious discipline and occult practice known to man. Why it is so shall be explained at other places in this volume.

In one form or another Yoga, mental discipline and physical exercises combined, has been in vogue in different parts of the earth from time immemorial, forming a part—sometimes a repellent part—of primitive cults and creeds. Some of the unsavoury practices continue to this day, incorporated into obscene rituals and ceremonies of some Yoga cults. In the light of these facts it is a mistake to treat Yoga as an independent system of exercises devised exclusively to bestow peace of mind or access to the occult world on those who practice it. But rather, it should be taken as a valuable system of tried religious practices, collected and coordinated, designed to form a much-needed adjunct to any religion of mankind for lending corroboration to the possibility of spiritual experience.

The modern tendency to divide Yoga into several different distinct and separate types, such as Karma-Yoga, Jnana-Yoga, Dhyana-Yoga, Mantra-Yoga, and the like, is based on an incorrect appraisal of the circumstances that led to the development of this science and an incorrect knowledge of its history. In the

earliest religious literature of India no such distinction is made. It is true there must have always existed numerous schools of spiritual culture to cater to the needs of men of different tastes, different religious beliefs, different intellectual levels, and at different stages of moral development; and these schools, as is natural and as happens even now, must have designated their systems differently to invest them with importance and to attract disciples. But that difference extended only to the pattern of methods used and not to the fundamental concept of Yoga.

In the Bhagavad-Gita the enumeration of several forms of Yoga is an attempt at synthesis and every form has been praised. This is also clear from the reference made to the identity of *sankhya* and Yoga. In the Gita, from first to last, Yoga is treated as a powerful means toward emancipation, as an integral and essential part of man's religious zeal. The same view is taken in other well-known religious books of the Hindus. In the course of time the various methods of Yoga were also incorporated into the sacred books of Buddhists and penetrated to Tibet, China, Japan, and other places in the Far East. The diverse forms of Yoga, in vogue in India from very early times, embrace nearly all the methods adopted by people in different epochs and of different climes from the crude, primitive attempts made to gain supernatural power of healing, exorcism, black magic, prophecy, and the like to the subsequent supreme endeavour of spiritual illumination. Broadly defined the term *Yoga* can be applied to any systematic effort made by man to effect the assuagement of spiritual thirst by the use of suitable psychosomatic exercises out of the vast inventory of methods mentioned in Yoga texts and other religious documents. The main thing to be kept in mind is that Yoga is not an accidentally discovered royal road to spiritual experience nor the secret treasure house of some magically effective methods for gaining uncanny psychical powers. In its diverse forms it is in reality the conglomeration of almost all the methods for the attainment of supernormal states of consciousness devised by the religious zeal of man. In other words, Yoga, in the real

sense of the term and in the light of the purpose for which it is employed, is to the supersensory or spiritual part of man what empirical science is to his visible or physical part.

Yoga provides methods for the attestation of spiritual truths, but the laboratory is the man himself. In this sublime enterprise he has to experiment upon himself to know the real facts about his own existence, or about the entity who never reveals his own nature to him from birth to the last day of his pilgrimage on earth, and keeps him perpetually mystified about his past and future, a prey to doubts and misgivings from the day he begins to think coherently to the end. It never was and never can be a readily available talisman to bridge the yawning gulf between the seen and the unseen, between the physical and the superphysical for all and sundry who undertake it. On the other hand, the mental and physical constitution of the seeker and the diligence and purity of purpose with which he devotes himself to the effort are of paramount importance in determining the measure of success he achieves. It must be clearly understood that Yoga does not provide, as is sometimes supposed, a way of escape from the earthly part of our lives or a back-door entrance to the Divine for the evasion of religious obligations and spiritual responsibilities—speaking in universal, not parochial, terms—that devolve on man.

Patanjali, in his Yoga-Sutras, introducing the doctrine for the first time as a distinct and methodical system of spiritual exercises and philosophy, defines Yoga as restraint of the fluctuations of mind-stuff. In other words, it means a condition of mental arrest in which the superphysical existence of consciousness, beyond the range of the senses and the mind, becomes perceptible to the initiate. According to Yoga-Sutras one of the attributes necessary in the aspirant is Astikta, or belief in God. This belief is not to be taken in any restricted sense. In order to be qualified as an “Astikta,” one may believe in an anthropomorphic God or a multitude of gods or a God without form, or a Transcendent Reality in the shape of Brahman or Shiva or Divinity in any

conceivable mould, but he must believe in Vedas and in the spiritual destiny of man. The followers of sankhya, which does not advocate a belief in God, but in the plurality of individual souls and *prakriti*, or matter, exploit Yoga for the verification of their own tenets. Similarly Buddhists use it for establishing the validity of their own conceptions that human existence is a series of incarnations not of an individual soul, but of a combination of elements, until after righteous endeavour it terminates in *nirvana* or cessation from the cycle of births and deaths.

The monotheists, the dualists, and the pantheists in India look up to and use Yoga for the demonstration of their particular spiritual beliefs and dogmas. The Vedantists practice it to prove that the soul or *Atman* and *Brahman* are one and the phenomenal world is an illusion born of the action of *maya*, an unfathomable and inexplicable conditioning factor, which envelops the Atman in a veil of myth. The Saivites practice their own forms of Yoga to prove that the universe is the manifestation of *shakti*, the creative and active aspect of the Shiva-Shakti combination, the two-in-one attribute of Para Shiva, the lord of creation, who is both the creator and the created, by combining the conscious principle and the conscious creative energy in one. In fact, all sects, creeds, and faiths in India, and there are many of them, depend on Yoga for the demonstration of their truths and the verification of their varied and, sometimes, diametrically opposed beliefs.

It is therefore obvious that Yoga has to be viewed from a broader angle than is sometimes used at present. Even in recent years the results attained through the practice of Yoga have been variously evaluated and described by the religious luminaries of India. The Vedantists, the Buddhists, the worshipers of *Shakti*, or Shakts, the Vaisnavites and all the rest, who claim success in Yoga, describe their experience in terms of the doctrines and beliefs of their own creed. This means that the final state of Yoga, namely, the ultimate condition of mental arrest or Samādhi, is not always the same but varies with the individual and the faith he owns. From this it follows clearly that those who wish

to take up the practice of Yoga, with a definite understanding that it would lead to such-and-such a condition, and those who foster this belief among the people not well versed in the history and the entire application of the system, are not treading on solid ground.

This misconception not only leads to wrong endeavour, disappointment, and frustration but also to a tremendous waste of human energy. The only reasonable and safe attitude would be to treat Yoga as a systematized form of religious striving, needing lifelong attention and sacrifice, for a successful consummation, as has always been recognized; but what that consummation would be no one can be sure from the start. If the exercises and the disciplines enjoined are followed scrupulously one may expect a measure of success, provided the body and the mind are already in a certain state of maturity, but what form that success would take, what would be the nature of the ecstasy, what mental phenomena would be witnessed and what shape the vision would take, no one can predict. It is thus evident that the stereotyped goal of an unfluctuating and unmodified state of consciousness mentioned by Patanjali does not hold true for all. In the Yoga-Sutras he postulates the existence of Iswara, not as the Almighty Creator of the Universe and the ultimate source and refuge of all that exists, but as a sort of superior overself that helps earnest seekers to gain *moksa*, or liberation, with the practice of Yoga. This concept of the ultimate is at variance with the Brahman of Vedanta, the Shiva of Saivite, and Vishnu of the Vaisnavite cults in India. Such a variation in the concept of the Transcendent Reality, depending on the pattern of the vision experienced in *samadhi*, provides an irrefutable testimony to the fact that the supersensory experience of even the highest adepts in Yoga in the past has not been identical, but unmistakably varied even in respect to the fundamental truths.

The main problem, on which no light has been thrown by any writer, ancient or modern, is: How does the extraordinary condition of consciousness associated with Yoga and other forms of

spiritual effort come about? How does the practitioner find himself wafted, in the state of trance or Samādhi to regions of omnipotence, transcending the narrow human limits, or to regions of deathlessness, glory, and incomparable bliss? Although the ecstasy of a modern mystic or Yogi denotes a tremendous leap forward from the self-induced trance of a Shaman, the experience of a state of power with vastly extended knowledge or of a direct contact with higher beings or higher states of consciousness, which is common to both, reveals an undeniable similarity in the basic characteristics of the two. In dealing with Yoga we are, therefore, faced by a historical problem, stretching across vast spans of time, that has its roots in the uncanny performances of the medicine-man and the witchdoctor in primitive societies and its branches in the varied experience of Western mystics, the Sufis of the Middle East, the Taoists of China, the Zen masters of Japan, the Yogis of India and Tibet in more recent historic times.

On account of the fact that there is a radical difference in the concept of Yoga, as presented in this volume, with corroboration from ancient canonical texts and standard books on the subject, and the generally accepted ideas, current today, it is necessary to make this distinction clear at the outset in order to avoid confusion. According to my view all systems of Yoga embody divergent methods for the metamorphosis of consciousness. The real aim of Yoga is not to cause an obstruction in the normal flow of thought by sustained efforts of concentration, but to open new areas of perception in the brain capable of manifesting a transhuman state of consciousness. The ideas expressed by some modern writers that the practice of concentration, carried to the required degree, can enable the Sadhaka to keep out both the sensory impressions, coming from outside, and the subconscious impulses, invading the mind from within, and in this state of freedom to experience the transcendent, do not at all present a correct picture of the processes released by Yoga or of the ultimate state to which it leads. There is no agreement at the present moment between the principles underlying Yoga and the concepts

of modern psychology and, therefore, any attempt to explain one in terms of the other cannot lead to an understanding of the causes that generate the supernormal states of consciousness associated with Yoga.

The aim of Yoga is to accelerate a natural process, already at work in the human organism: to mould the brain to a higher state of awareness. Modern psychology has no inkling of this process and, therefore, does not take it seriously into account in its treatment of the mind and its problems. There is no recognition among present-day psychologists of the obvious fact that the human brain is still evolving toward a yet unknown destination. This being the case, psychology can as yet have no jurisdiction over the province covered by Yoga. It is for this reason that, in spite of its antiquity and the overwhelming testimony of hundreds of top-rank intellects of India, the validity of Yoga as a means to gain transcendent states of consciousness still remains to be accepted by the scholars of today, and the whole subject is obscure and controversial. Even in India there is a great divergence of opinion concerning the efficacy of the various practices as well as about the ultimate condition toward which Yoga leads. Thus for Sankara, the exercise of the intellect to discriminate between the real and the unreal, before the actual beginning of the various steps of Yoga, is necessary in order to reach the supreme state; while in the Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali no such condition is imposed. In Gita, the greatest stress is laid on passionate love and longing for the Deity whether manifesting itself in a form or in formlessness; Ramanuja, another famous exponent of Vedanta, believes in acts of daily worship, devout meditation (*upasana*), and self-surrender as the surest way of reaching Brahman. He says in Sri Bhasya (iii.2.23): "It is only in the state of perfect endearment, i.e., in meditation bearing the character of deep devotion, that intuitive knowledge of Brahman is gained and not in any other state."

The Vedas lay stress on the performance of daily observances, austerity and *dhyana* (meditation), and the earlier Upanishads

on righteous conduct, control of the senses and meditation on Brahman as the means to liberation. The Upanishads, which show an advance over the ritualistic practices (*karma-kanda*) of the Vedas as a result of social and mental evolution achieved during the course of centuries intervening between the two, assign a higher place to intellectual discrimination in the pursuit of , *moksa* (liberation) than to religious rites and daily Karma (agnihotra, etc.). Thus it is said in the Mundaka-Upanishad (iii.1.8):

“It, i.e., the Brahman, is not comprehended through the eye, nor through speech, nor through the other senses, nor is it attained through austerity or Karma (daily performance of religious duties). When one becomes purified in mind with the blessings of a rightly discriminating intellect then only can one realize that indivisible Self through meditation.” According to Bhagavad Purana utter surrender to the Lord paves the way to emancipation. “Those who dedicate every day,” it says, 10.26.15, “their passion, anger, fear, love, unity and friendship to Hari, attain Him.” This is confirmed in Bhagavad-Gita (ix.34) in the words of Sri Krishna addressed to Arjuna: “Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, make obeisance to Me, worship Me, thus uniting yourself to Me and entirely depending on Me you shall come to Me.” Krishna repeats this promise again more emphatically at the end of the discourse (xviii.66) thus: “Surrendering all duties (*dharmas*) come to Me alone for refuge”; “Grieve not, I shall absolve thee of all sins.”

The greatest emphasis among all the factors conducive to liberation has been laid on detachment, intense devotion, and purity of mind by most of the spiritual luminaries of India. The possibility of emancipation for one who has not purified himself is categorically denied in the Katha Upanishad (1.11.24). “One who has not desisted from evil conduct, who has not his senses under control, whose mind is not concentrated and free from anxiety cannot attain this Self through knowledge.” The preliminary practices of Yoga are, in actual fact, meant for effecting the much-needed purification of the bodily organs, the nervous system and

the mind. Without this purification the practice of concentration, *dharma* and *dhyana* becomes fruitless. For this reason some of the renowned Yoga saints in India consider the dry disciplines of Yoga an impediment rather than an aid to realization as compared to purity of mind and intense longing for the Supreme. Surdas in his *Brahmragita* ridicules the idea of Yoga without *bhakti* (devotion) serving as a means for the attainment of God. In his *Sursagar* he makes the following observation: "In whose company am I to talk. He talks of Yoga in which all taste of life is burnt up."

Kabir, another famous Yoga saint, presents the same idea in these words: "Without devotion to God the wicked go astray. Whomever I approach for my deliverance is himself caught in the net. Yogis say Yoga is best and there is nothing else. Hairy and shaven Sadhus (ascetics) claim that they have found *siddhi* (psychic powers, perfection). The Pandit, the warrior, the poet, the patron – each alone says he is great. . . . Leave passion to your right and left and hold on to the feet of Hari (the Lord)." San-karadeva, the far-famed saint of Assam who flourished in the fifteenth century, conveys the same idea when he says: "Thou has muttered spells (*mantras*), undergone austerities. . . . Yoga and logic have been mastered by thee, yet clouded is thy mind, for without devotion there can be no salvation. All piety resideth in the name of Rama; this is the essential message of all holy books." The earnest attitude of utter surrender and devotion is beautifully expressed in the Mahanarayan Upanishad (38.1) in these words: "May the Supreme accept me. May the Blissful accept me. May the Supreme alone that is Blissful accept me. O Lord, being one among Thy creatures, I am Thy child. End the dreary dream of the sorrowful existence that I experience. For that I offer myself as an oblation unto Thee, O Lord, together with the *prana* [life energy] Thou hast infused in me."

The whole spiritual literature of India is pervaded through and through with the utterances of venerated sages and seers, from the age of the Upanishads to the present day, proclaiming

purity of mind, detachment from the fret and fever of the world, extreme devotion to and constant meditation on the Deity as the most effective means to self-realization. The regimented system of Yoga, as propounded by Patanjali, beginning with *yama* and ending in *Samādhi*, is not earlier than the beginning of the Christian era, though the practices enumerated must have been in use from time immemorial. In the Vedas and the Upanishads *tapas* (austerity), *mitya karma* (daily observances), *dhyana* (meditation), *bhakti* (devotion), *vairagya* (detachment), *viveka* (discrimination), *brahmearya* (continence), *upasana* (constant, devout and reverent thought), *jnana* (intuitive knowledge), and the like are all said to be the channels through which one can attain knowledge of the Reality. As Yoga etymologically denotes union or, in other words, the merger of the embodied individual soul with the all-pervading Isvara or Brahman, it follows that every practice or method, whether adopted singly or in combination with others, which tends to bring about this fusion can be called Yoga. For this reason Bhagavad Gita, Puranas, and other books mention various forms of Yoga: Dhyana-Yoga, Karma-Yoga, Jnana-Yoga, Mantra-Yoga, Laya-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Hatha-Yoga, Surta-SabdaYoga, etc. The system adumbrated by Patanjali is sometimes called Raja-Yoga in contradistinction to Mantra-Yoga and Hatha-Yoga of the Tantras. Several of the methods used in one form of Yoga are more or less common to other forms also, with more emphasis on this or that practice than on others.

Since every form of Yoga is designed to lead to *moksa* (liberation) on attainment of knowledge of the self it follows that *citta-vrtti nirodhah* (restraint of the fluctuations of the mind-stuff) is not the only way to attain the unitive state but that it can be obtained, perhaps more easily and with greater fulfillment, through other paths, such as the path of *bhakti* (devotion), *jnana* (intuitive knowledge), *karma* (religious observances with selfless action), and *upasana* (constant devout thought of the Deity) also. Purity of mind, detachment, self-discipline, and chastity are the common ingredients necessary to be acquired on any of these paths. That

the goal of all forms of Yoga is the same is asserted by the Gita (xiii.24 and 25) in these words: "Some by meditation behold the Self in themselves with the help of pure reason, others by proceeding along the path of knowledge and others, again, by treading the path of action. Others, however, not knowing this, take to worship (*upasana*) by hearing from others, and they, too, who are thus intent on hearing, transcend death." From this it is clear that all forms of Yoga ultimately lead to a state of inner illumination. This point is further clarified in the Gita (V.5), while discussing the relative merits of Sankhya and Yoga schools of self-discipline: "The supreme state which is attained by Sankhya is also reached by Yoga. He who sees that Sankhya and Yoga are one really sees." The implication of the synthesis, attempted in Bhagavad-Gita, is obvious. To the casual observer it merely signifies that all paths ultimately lead to God. For the common man the same view is also expressed in Gita (iv.II): "By whatsoever path men approach Me even so do I meet them, for all men follow My path from all sides." For an earnest seeker, however, who wishes to go to the root of the matter, this position gives rise to a host of problems which must be answered if Yoga is to be made acceptable to the modern highly sophisticated intellect. If constant practice of meditation in a fixed posture with regulated breathing (*pranayama*) and eyes fixed on the tip of the nose or the place between the eyebrows, can lead to the same supersensory state, after years of hard endeavour, to which mere repetition of the name of the Lord or the *mantra* "Om" without a regular posture or *pranayama*, or mere singing the praises of God in a devotional frame of mind, or pure intellectual deliberation on the Real and the Unreal, or simple performance of daily work in a spirit of dedication, or any other act of worship can pave the way, it undeniably signifies that the conventional techniques of Yoga are not the only means to gain access to higher states of consciousness or to the occult areas of the mind. On the other hand, it shows that there are varying states and varying degrees of responsiveness in

the minds of the seekers. This accounts for the diverse nature of the methods, some easy and some difficult, that must be adopted, according to the aptitude and the state of development of each seeker, in order to lead to a successful conclusion of the endeavour.

The modern books on Yoga, presenting a stereotyped version of the Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali or of Hatha-Yoga, as propounded in the ancient manuals on the subject, have been instrumental in creating a wrong impression, especially in the West, that the practices enjoined in these systems induce a special psycho-mental condition, by the elimination of sensory impressions and thought, in which the spirit, liberated from these fetters, perceives its own glorious, ever blissful and immortal nature. If it is accepted that a transcendent state of consciousness can proceed only from the suppression of the activity of the mind, and by completely shutting out stimuli coming from the senses, the question immediately arises as to how, in that case, does the same state of transcendence supervene in the case of a Bakhta (devotee) or a Karma-Yogi (man of selfless action), who merely adores the Lord in his heart or surrenders all his actions to Him? In such cases as well as in that of the illuminati who possess the condition from birth, the higher state of consciousness can manifest itself, and has indeed manifested itself on occasions, without the arduous mental training and rigid disciplines of regimented Yoga. This is an enigma hard to explain in the light of the current psychological explanations offered for the final state of *Samadhi* attained by Yoga. However difficult it may be to solve the riddle, the fact remains that in all authoritative canonical books and other spiritual literature of the Hindus the equality of opportunity for the attainment of the highest state to all the aspirants, namely, the orthodox Yogi, the man of dedicated action, the devotee, the discriminating intellectual and the man of unwavering faith and piety, has been unreservedly guaranteed.

This possibility is recognized clearly by Patanjali in Sutra I of the fourth book of his Yoga Sutras wherein he says: "*Siddhis* (psychic powers and perfection) proceed from birth or from drugs

or from spells (*mantras*) or from austerity or *samadhi*.” This aphorism plainly signifies that the *siddhis* resulting from concentration and *samadhi*, gained through the methods advocated by him, are naturally present in some men at birth or can be attained by the use of certain drugs or by spells or austerity (*tapas*). In this way Patanjali has equated the possession of psychic powers and mystical faculties, exhibited by some individuals as a natural endowment at birth, and the trancelike states, caused by certain drugs or by the casting of spells or by fasting and other forms of austerity, with the *Siddhis* proceeding from *samadhi* and the long, elaborate course of self-discipline and concentration prescribed by him. Critically examined this passage is of tremendous significance. If drugs and spells can bestow the same intuitive state of knowledge and the same psychic gifts as result from the extremely arduous discipline of Yoga, leading to cessation of *karma* and to liberation, the ultimate goal of all yogic disciplines, it means that potions and charms can be as effective in cutting asunder the veil of maya and the fetters of karma as all the virtues demanded and the difficult efforts required in the practice of Yoga for many years—self-sacrifice, devotion, and righteousness—all dedicated to God.

Such an idea would, no doubt, strike those who believe in the infallibility of divine justice as most revolting. It would equate the mescaline addict, sunk in sensuality, with the mystic and the saint whose immaculate life has been one long sacrifice to a holy cause. Obviously there is a veil of mystery surrounding the entire subject. This prevents us from probing more deeply into the inner recesses of the spirit in order to reconcile the striking anomalies which bewilder those who would like to have a rational explanation for the varied phenomena attending spiritual unfoldment, in order to obliterate their doubts. All the issues and anomalies, mentioned above, will be discussed at their proper places in other chapters of this volume. It is here sufficient to point them out in order to show that Yoga, in the proper sense of the term, embraces a wide variety of methods and practices

prescribed to gain a supernormal state of consciousness that has been an invariable adornment of the enlightened sages, prophets, and mystics of the past. Many of them never practiced Yoga in their life and were born with the faculty already developed in the womb. Others gained it through frequenting the company of holy men and hearing the descriptions of the supreme state from their lips, others by prayer, still others by austerity and self-mortification; some by practicing the disciplines of Yoga for an incredibly short spell of time and some by sudden insight, a sudden flash of intuitive knowledge, which, like a streak of lightning, clears the darkness of the mind (*avidya*), leaving them amazed and breathless, blessed with a freshly gained, glorious vision that penetrated into the nature of things.

By diverse paths and in diverse forms the seers of India, the Taoists of China, the Buddhist arhats, the Sufis of the Middle East, the Zen masters in Japan, the Siddhas of Tibet and the mystics of the West attained through Yoga the fusion of the individual with universal consciousness, interpreting their experience in diverse ways. In some cases the fusion might have been momentary, in others of longer duration, lasting for hours, and in still others existing permanently. But that the impact of each experience was most overpowering, is clear beyond a doubt. The complexity of the phenomenon, its varied nature, and the fact that one, witnessing it in himself, is completely carried away for the time being by the overwhelming nature of the experience have always stood in the way of an intelligent understanding and consistent expression of the condition. Hardly any one of them could coherently express what he had apprehended. No one of them was the same after the experience as he had been before it. No one of them fell below the stature he attained as a result of it.

The very first contact with the Divine, the very first taste of the indescribable experience, the very first sight of the Ineffable changed the lives and metamorphosed the inner being of those who succeeded in attaining the Transcendent. They then pined day and night for the same experience and were infinitely more happy in the inner than in the outer world. It does not materially affect

the transformed condition achieved if there are great divergences in their accounts of the supreme experience. It also does not matter if there are wide differences in the experience itself. The fact that one of them was blessed with the vision of an adored Saviour, another with that of a venerated Prophet, another with the glorious image of a preconceived God, or another with the vision of a formless but all-pervading and almighty Conscious Being, does not falsify the experience, but only accentuates the varied nature of the phenomenon and the inadequacy of any current explanation offered for it. What matters is that the basic characteristics of the mystical trance or *samadhi* are present in varying forms in the experience: an overmastering sense of wonder at the extraordinary occurrence, the unutterably glorious nature of the vision, a powerful feeling of awe combined with inexpressible happiness, overflow of love, and entrancement or a state of complete or partial oblivion to the world. Last, but not the least, there is the vivid consciousness of a higher existence or of submersion into an ocean of knowledge in which all that was obscured is now explained.

This is the aim of Yoga: the elevation of the narrow, fear-ridden and desire-tormented human consciousness to a state of indescribable beauty, glory, and bliss. This is the aim of all religious striving and spiritual endeavour, this transmutation of the human mind, culminating in its liberation from the chains of ego, insatiable desire, and fear of death. But this far-reaching transformation of personality is never achieved by one's efforts alone. The as yet inscrutable laws of heredity must have prepared the soil for the efforts to bear fruit. Then only can the mortal become immortal and the earthly divine. Then only does a fortunate seeker gain access to the indefinable inner world, the glorious realm of consciousness to which no human sense and no man-made device can penetrate: a world, infinitely vaster and infinitely more mysterious and breath-taking, than the material universe, which can only be approached directly by the knowing self, without the mediation of the senses and the intrusion of the intellect, for it is as far removed from the world, apprehended

by the mind, and explored by the intellect as the brilliant light of the noonday sun is from the dark shadows of the night.

The well-known Christian mystic writing under the name of Dionysius toward the end of the fifth century has tried to portray this state in these words: "The super-unknown, the super-luminous and loftiest height, wherein the simple and absolute and unchangeable mysteries are cloaked in the superluculent darkness of hidden mystic silence, which supershines most brightly in the blackest night, and, in the altogether intangible and unseen, fills the eyeless understanding with superbeautiful brightness. - . . And thou, dear friend, in thy intent practice of mystical contemplation, leave behind both thy senses and thy intellectual operations, and all things known by sense and intellect, and all things which are not and which are, and set thyself, as far as may be, to unite thyself in unknowing with Him, who is above all things and knowledge, for by being purely free and absolute, out of self and all things, thou shalt be led up to the ray of the divine darkness, stripped from all and loosed from all."

Compare this with the description contained in the Mandukya Upanishad (i.7): "They consider the fourth, i.e., the Turiya state (the crowning state of Yoga) to be that which is not conscious of the internal world, nor conscious of the external world, nor conscious of both the worlds, nor a mass of consciousness, nor simple consciousness, nor unconsciousness; which is unseen, beyond empirical dealings, beyond the grasp (of the organs of action), uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable; whose valid proof consists in one single belief in the Self; in which all phenomena cease; and which is unchanging, auspicious and nondual. That is the Self, and that is to be known."

It is obvious that both these quotations refer to the same condition, to the same incommunicable, mystical experience, in which the overpowered intellect reels back defeated from the arena where the spirit unfolds itself. The crowning achievement of Yoga and every true and healthy form of spiritual striving can be the same. Only the psychological constitution of the individuals causes the variations.

## 2

### **How This Aim Is Achieved**

The mystical state is still an incomprehensible phenomenon of consciousness. The range of its expression is so varied and the area of its manifestations so extensive that it is difficult at this stage of our knowledge to assign any well-marked limits to it. In its most common form the time of its occurrence and the duration of its operation are unpredictable. The flash of inner illumination may last only for a few moments, like the dazzling brightness of a meteor shooting across the sky in the darkness of night, or it may continue for an hour or several hours or even days at a time. It may occur once in a lifetime, or a few times in one's life, or daily, or every night at different hours. Sri Ramakrishna's ecstasies lasted for both short and long durations and, sometimes, entrancement occurred several times in a day. St. Angela of Foligno had her highest vision of God three times, and Plotinus, according to his disciple Porphyry, four times in a period of six years. In the case of a clergyman quoted by William James, the soul opened into the infinite . . . with ineffable joy and exultation" only once, while in the case of Margiad Evans the state of Union was of long duration, extending even to sleep. Shams-i-Tabriz the mystic poet of Persia, was perennially in a state of divine intoxication: "In a place even beyond outer space, in a

tract without a trace of shadow, soul and body transcending live in the soul of my Loved One anew," he says.

The variation between one kind of experience and another even in a few sample cases pertaining to different people relating to different periods, is so great and so unaccountable that it is extremely difficult to understand that they are allied one another. The number of those belonging to the regular order of ecstasies is comparatively limited. There are many people who at one time or another in their lives experience the beatific vision suddenly, in unexpected ways or under strange circumstances, and feel themselves in a new world or under a new order of things. As if temporarily gifted with a new kind perception, they see their surroundings transformed into a dreamland, a realm of inexpressible glory in which, forgetting for a while who they are, they taste the joy of a liberated existence, unencumbered by the problems and obsessions of the earth. Or the whole cosmic panorama may appear so changed, so magnified, so full of grandeur and sublimity that the mind reels under the impact.

The same experience in a more or less intense form occurs to many people in dreams or in the state between waking and dreaming. They see themselves as if in heavenly surroundings in a highly exalted and blissful state, drinking in the beauty and the glory of the paradise around them, or viewing a celestial object or a godlike being with a rapture that is unknown to the waking consciousness." The majority of people who have any type of mystical experience on rare occasions in their life are often reluctant to relate these intimate episodes of their being to others, under the mistaken idea that the occurrence might savour of the abnormal, or that such an experience, being extremely rare or peculiar to them alone, might be ridiculed by those to whom they narrate the incident. There are other variations also. The rapture, with an instantaneous break through the normal state of awareness into a superearthly plane of existence in which one is swallowed by a flood of inexpressible bliss, might be evoked

by a strain of melody, a beautiful object, the atmosphere of a holy shrine, or even by the embrace of love. The power of expression and the sense of evaluation of their own feelings and mental states vary with different people. Some are prone to depict even trivial occurrences in a highly embellished and colourful language, while in the case of others a restricted power of expression stands in the way of an adequate presentation of remarkable experiences which can rank with those recorded of well-known mystics and saints.

Viewed from a rational aspect, experiences of a transcendent nature, occurring in persons who never practised Yoga or any other form of spiritual discipline, nor were particularly devotional or even deeply religious in the ordinary sense of the term, present a riddle which is not explicable on the basis of any of the numerous solutions proposed for the problem. No one can deny the basic similarity between the ecstatic states described by Wordsworth, Tennyson, Charlotte Bronte, C. E. Montague, Plato, Whitman, Marcel Proust, Nietzsche, and a host of other writers, thinkers, and those recorded by reputed mystics of the West and renowned yogis of the East. There must be countless other intelligent men and women of many countries and cultures who had this experience at one time or another like a bolt from the blue, during the course of an ordinary, strictly mundane life, and who had either no inclination or no literary ability to describe it in words. It appears unbelievable that lifelong devotion to the Deity and sacrifice of all the enticements and pleasures of earth, with ceaseless observance of the rigid disciplines of Yoga, should fail to elicit any reward or, here also in rare cases, should only be recompensed in almost the same way as some individuals, among the worldly mass of mankind, are rewarded without having made any effort whatsoever to deserve it. But it is a hard, historical reality which, so far, has not been satisfactorily explained.

The unitive state may range from a single, momentary sense of oneness with nature with a blissful release from the world-weary selfhood, felt in a sudden upsurge of a new, unidentified

life from within, to experience, described by the well-known mystic Jacob Boehme when he “felt” in a flash of lightning that the gate of his soul was opened and he saw and knew what no books could “teach,” to the state of perennial ecstasy, described by Abhinava-Gupta in these words:

O, Bhairava-Natha [Lord Shiva]  
 Thou Refuge of the friendless, Supreme Being,  
 Pervading both the sentient and the insentient worlds,  
 Pure Consciousness, One, Eternal, Infinite . . .  
 By the potency of Thy Grace the world today  
 Appears to me to be Thy Person, O Mahestra,  
 And Thee as my Atman ever more, and so I feel  
 This whole creation as my very self. . .

The taproot of mystical experience lies in consciousness, and consciousness in different individuals is not the same. The one great lesson which this experience brings home to us is that the very fundamental constituent of personality, namely consciousness, varies in different people. When we say that a certain man is intelligent and another dull or that one is more aesthetic or sensitive than the other, we often invest him with a conscious personality like our own, but with the difference that he is more or less intelligent, or more or less sensitive. This is a mistake based on a fundamentally erroneous way of thinking; for as no two faces and no two streams of thought are exactly alike, so no two units or pools of consciousness, representing the personality or the outer area of manifestation of the soul, are alike in any two persons, including even identical twins. Each unit of human consciousness has, as it were, its own volume, its own area, its own depth, its own power of perception, grasp, and penetration. It has its own memory, scale of passion and intensity of desire. Each personality has a distinct stamp, a peculiar pattern clearly embossed on it, to which it conforms more or less throughout its life. In the genuine mystical state this everyday personality that has its roots in the deepest strata of the human mind evaporates for a time, opening its otherwise strongly enclosed precincts to the influx of a torrent that floods the now empty enclosure with

a new kind of life, a new pattern of consciousness, and, overflowing the former narrow boundaries, causes mixed feelings of wonderment, exaltation, bliss, awe, and a sense of all-pervasiveness, infinity, and sovereignty in the now eclipsed original personality, a thin shadow of which still lurks in the mind. If this shadow did not survive it would be impossible for the normal consciousness to have any recollection of the extraordinary experience. One would come back from it, like a man awakening from dreamless slumber, without the recollection of any impression received in that state. Even in *nirvikalpa samadhi* (contemplation) an attenuated shadow of the normal self continues to function and brings back the memory of the stupendous vision seen. Quivering and throbbing, the overshadowed self, shrunken almost to a pinpoint before the immeasurable Presence that now encompasses it, has still the faculty left to make a comparison between itself and the veritable Universe of Being, unlike anything known to it on the earth, absolutely beyond description, with which for a breathless interval and with unutterable rapture it finds itself in complete identity, like a drop of water merged with the ocean to which it belongs.

The description of the Cosmic Being contained in the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita shows overawed Arjuna (the human element still left even in the highest form of mystical contemplation) in a state of utter surrender, confronted by the infinite, indescribable Universe of Life, revealed to him in a divine vision through the grace of Krishna (the Cosmic Self). If mystical union is a genuine experience of the human mind, and not merely a delusive state, there must be a concordance in the essentials of the fully blossomed state experienced by the visionaries of all religions, irrespective of the period or the culture to which they belong. The surest way to cast a doubt on the validity of the phenomenon, and thereby on the fundamental basis of religion itself, is for the adherents of one faith to belittle or to question the genuineness of the experience described by the contemplatives of another religion or cult. The tendency among some writers on mysticism to devalue the supreme experience, depicted in

the Upanishads, of the absorption of Atman into the attributeless Brahman, in which one is lost to everything that can be apprehended by the intellect, reveals only a lack of firsthand knowledge of the crowning state of mystical contemplation. The view expressed by Dean Inge that the highest state of Indian mystics is that of inertness, of total self-loss and annihilation springs from a sectarian concept of the Divinity. To hold that the Supreme Being conforms to this or that image or can be experienced in this or that form is to bring Him, who is beyond the furthest reach of our thought, down to the prosaic level of a puny human being. The view is self-contradictory, for were the experience of a nihilistic character, with total loss of the observing power of the soul, how could the seers bring back a vivid description of it, even in negative terms—that it is not this . . . ; not this . . . ; not this . . .—on returning to the normal state?

It is obvious that even among intellectuals there is a misconception about the real nature of the ecstatic state. For one who never had the experience it is impossible to imagine the condition of the contemplative's mind at the time of the flight of the soul toward the Ineffable. Were God or the Absolute to be apprehended as we apprehend the objects of senses or the abstract ideas present in our mind, it would reduce the whole phenomenon of mysticism to everyday occurrences of the material world, perhaps in a more grandiose, more impressive and more exalted form, but a mundane experience nevertheless. By no stretch of the imagination can a supersensory knowledge of the Godhead be likened to knowledge in the ordinary sense of the term. There must occur the development of a new faculty, the opening of a new channel of perception or a radical transformation and enhancement of the normal powers of observation of the soul to enable it to have even a fleeting glimpse of the Supreme Being. Since God, as He is conceived in all Semitic religions, is the Maker or Master of the human soul and according to Vedanta is the Absolute as also the Atman itself, it follows in either case that in order to apprehend Him the soul has to transcend the

limitations of the flesh in the former case; or those, imposed on it by *maya*, in the latter; and to attain a transhuman state of knowledge where this infinite Ocean of Being or this boundless Conscious Substratum of the whole universe can be known.

This means, in other words, that the human soul in order to apprehend the infinite must cease to be finite itself and must partake for the time being of superhuman attributes and a superhuman state of cognition to have even a transient or fragmentary knowledge of Him or That, who is normally beyond the grasp of his sensory equipment and mind. In this state of transcendence, in this rapturous union between the Creator, the Master, or the Substance of the soul and the soul itself, in both the Eastern and Western senses of the phenomenon, how can the enthralled mystic, transported to other realms of existence, determine where his light of knowledge ends and the glory of God begins? Like a grain of salt dropped into an ocean, his narrow personality melts and spreads the moment it comes in contact with the shore-less stream of life, surrendering joyously all its mental possessions, shedding cheerfully every individual trait that stands between it and the rapturous, incorporeal oceanic state of Being, happy beyond measure to be one with the glorious, everlasting All instead of an isolated mortal tormented by desire, death, and decay. "Thou wert ever close to me," says the famous mystical poetess of Kashmir, Lalladed, "and yet I searched for Thee till the evening shadows fell. But, lo, when at last I saw Thee in myself, I at once realized my distinction from the earth, that is, the body and identity with Thee." At another place she adds: "Having known Thee, I find that Thou art all and I nothing." What Some Western writers treat as "extinction" or "annihilation" after reading the description of "union with Brahman" or *nirvana* is, in actual fact, the effacement of the dividing line between the individual and the Cosmic Consciousness. Once transformed into an ocean, who would care to return to the uncertainty and the torment of a transient bubble?

The mistake is caused by the erroneous supposition that in

these high states of mystical union there is a complete obliteration of personality. This does not occur, since such an event would rob the supreme experience of all its happiness and grandeur. The same misunderstanding can result from the term *fana* used in Sufi literature. The word *fana* connotes extinction. The egobound, narrow human personality has to efface itself to make room for a higher state of Being to transcend the limitations, imposed by the senses, and to be in a position to grasp the hitherto Intangible and to know the previously Unknowable. When the contact takes place it has the effect of Divine Intoxication, so beautifully expressed by the Sufi poets. In this state of *sat-chit-ananda* (existence, consciousness, bliss) the enraptured soul breaking the restraining bonds of the ego loses all idea of the body, the world, and the objects of the senses in the contemplation of a surpassingly blissful, intensely alive, and extremely fascinating state of Being, which human language completely fails to portray. Embodied human life, magnified a hundredfold in awareness, in intellectual acumen, and in the intensity of higher emotions would still fall short of the exaltation and exhilaration experienced in the beatific state.

This ravishment of the soul is mentioned by St. Macarius of Egypt in one of his Homilies: "And it comes to pass that, having been without leisure all the day, in this one hour he gives himself to prayer, and his inner man is rapt, in prayer, in the immeasurable depth of the other world, in such sweetness that his mind is far away, being soft and carried thither, so that at that time oblivion comes into his mind because it has been filled up and taken captive by divine and heavenly things, carried to the infinite and incomprehensible, to things so wonderful that they may not be expressed by human speech; thus, in that hour he prays and says: 'Would that my soul had gone forth together with the prayer.' When once through prayer or meditation or by merely evoking the image of Divinity the soul enters into communion with the Ineffable, it is drawn deeper and deeper with irresistible power until, in the highest stage, one can say with

Shams-i-Tabriz that being now devoid of all distinctions and free of the chains that bind it to the earth, it becomes so completely identified with the Over-Self that no distinction becomes possible. The individual then, torn from the anchor of corporeal selfhood, oblivious of the world and its problems, plunges into the Infinite, like a raindrop falling into the sea.”

Mystical experience should not be viewed in isolation for any group of people, nor from the point of view of any particular faith, but rather, as a phenomenon of a universal character about the nature of which we are still in the dark. There is no fundamental difference between the pattern of the genuine mystical state experienced three thousand years ago, during the Vedic periods and that of today. It sounds paradoxical but it is true that, instead of an advancement in keeping with the improvement in the general intellectual level of mankind there has been regression in this direction, and in spite of the fact that the thirst for it continues unabated, the number of those who in recent times secured the supreme blessing of a mystical contact with the Divine has dwindled from that which prevailed during ancient or even medieval times. If the mystical experience betokens in reality a face-to-face encounter with Divinity or direct contact with universal consciousness, can there be anything more interesting and more important from the point of view of human aspirations than this for the attention and study of the human mind? That the quest has not been taken up in a serious way is a clear indication of the fact that either the phenomenon is not considered genuine by those competent to judge or for certain reasons no importance is attached to it.

Whatever the reason, viewed in the light of the facts mentioned in this volume, mystical experience of the right kind presents a problem which far exceeds in importance most other problems that engage the attention and consume the labour of countless painstaking investigators today. Because of its association with religion and the fact that the majority of those who earnestly strove for it in the past did so under the belief that the disciplines

undertaken or the austerities undergone provided the only way to reach God, or to gain release from the cycle of births and deaths in a tormenting world, mysticism, regarded as the crowning achievement of faith, became inextricably mingled with the myths and superstitions of the various creeds, from which position it has not been extricated so far. Even where a mystic, or a group of mystics, raised a cry of revolt against the tenets or dogmas of a particular religion or creed, there came into existence a new faith with its own set of rituals and dogmas, which in the course of time became as rigid and as unprogressive as the ones they had replaced. Some of them, carried away by the stupendous nature of their visions, identified themselves completely with what they thought was God or the Absolute, relegating the world and every human problem to a position of utter insignificance, unworthy of attention from one blessed with the supreme happiness of union with the Divine. This attitude of mind in the case of the overzealous and the ignorant could not but lead to extremes: to the negation of the world and its problems; to the neglect of the body and the needs of the flesh; to excessive self-denial, self-torture, and self-mortification; to distaste for life; to perversion and distortion of the intellect; and last, but not the least, to an obsessive preoccupation with the other world characterized by fantasy and delusive states of the mind.

It is a fact of history that during the millenniums, beginning about two thousand years before the birth of Christ, there appeared from time to time, in different parts of the world, specially gifted individuals who boldly proclaimed their connection with a superearthy Fount of Intelligence and, by their extraordinary utterances and writings, their high ethical standards and their intellectual attributes, proved their assertions to the satisfaction of the multitudes who followed them, leaving a mark on history which is as fresh today as it was in their own time. They present an enigma which even in this age of high intellectual and scientific achievement still stands unsolved. They are the founders of Yoga and every spiritual discipline, common

or esoteric, known to man. Almost all these illustrious personages had certain common characteristics that will be discussed later in this volume, and almost all of them had visionary experiences which guided them in creating unprecedented waves of enthusiasm among the people of their country and time for the attainment of spiritual ideals which were explained to them. As will be clarified later, the only rational explanation to account for this thus far inexplicable phenomenon lies in the admission that the human body has a still untapped reservoir of psychic energy and the human brain a hidden potentiality which, though dormant in the bulk of the race, somehow became active in these extraordinary men.

Once this is conceded, a ray of light begins to appear in the hitherto impenetrable darkness that surrounds mystical phenomena. The varied nature of the visionary experience, the variation in the degree of responsiveness in differently constituted individuals, the existence of the faculty in some from birth, and the need for employment of diverse methods, according to the psycho-physiological condition of each individual, now stand partially explained. It becomes apparent that in dealing with the so-called supernatural phenomena and religious genius which have been an incomprehensible feature of civilization, almost from its very birth, we are not stepping out into a weird, uncanny world where the solid earth is left completely behind, nor are we entering into the domain of a capricious God or any other spiritual entity who bestows enlightenment on only those selected few, who sing His praises while mortifying themselves, and who keeps the rest in utter darkness of the spirit, but that here, as elsewhere in the sphere of biology, we are confronted by a yet incomprehensible law of nature and a still undiscovered vital mechanism in the human body which are at the root of this great mystery. This law and this power mechanism must have, like other aspects of nature, some definite aim in view. Considering the fact that all those extraordinary spiritual men and women who had this power centre active from birth or who succeeded in stirring it to activity,

possessed almost invariably exceptional powers of mind and spirit, it becomes clear without a shadow of doubt that the aim of this mysterious mechanism is the upgrading of human consciousness toward a summit about which we can only guess at present.

Viewed in the right perspective the mystic bears a message of tremendous import for all mankind. He is not the passive introvert or inert visionary sunk in his own delusions and lost to the world, as some people take him to be, nor is he doomed to be a recluse, abstaining from all the pleasures of life, as the religious-minded usually picture him or wish him to be. But he is the still imperfect forerunner of the man to come, the ancestor of the future progeny, naturally endowed with a consciousness of the transcendent type, which the mystic experiences only rarely for brief durations with unutterable rapture, and finds it impossible to portray. He is the self-controlled seer, idealized in the Upanishads and the Gita, rapt in the contemplation of the inner universe of Being, calm and serene, who has overcome passion and lust, and who performs all his duties in a spirit of dedication, not only for his own welfare but also for that of the world. He is the industrious, self-sacrificing savant, urgently needed in our day, calm and contented, who probes into the mysteries of nature to find something of advantage for the well-being of the race, who has solved the problem of his own being and gained access to the higher strata of life. He represents, in short, the cream of mankind in the near future, the leader of thought and the ruler of nations, who experiences the Transcendent, and, fortified with supernal wisdom, thus acquired, with coordinated effort brings peace and order in the present ill-managed, lust-ridden, passion-ruled world.

This vision of mystics of the future, resulting in a spiritually dominated, intellectual age, may appear unreal, exaggerated, or even fantastic to the rationalists, who see no possibility of such a drastic change in the nature of man, always under the subjugation of his instincts. For even those who believe in spiritual un-

foldment and the existence of divine potentialities in man, the advent of a really great mystic is a rare occurrence, and the idea that a mystic hierarchy would ever come into being or, even if it did, would devote itself to the affairs of the world in the same manner as normal individuals do, may seem too utopian to be true. But seen dispassionately in the context of history, and in isolation from the agnostic trends of the day, a contrary view would be even more unrealistic and more at variance with the actual lessons of the past. Can there be any denial of the inviolable position that, all through the past, the greatest revolutions in human thought and human social orders were effected neither by men in power nor by those in possession of high intellectual endowments, divorced from the spiritual, but by those who had a powerful mystical streak in their composition? Do not the ideas of Yajnavalkya, Moses, Buddha, the other seers of the Upanishads, the prophets of the Old Testament, Socrates, Plato, Christ, Muhammad, Shankara, and others, all of them mystics of the highest order, still dominate the world? The upheavals caused by Darwin, Marx, Freud, and others in this age were not greater. The materialistic and mechanical view of life and mind which their ideas profess, lacks proof and has still to pass the acid test of time.

The issue has been touched in passing to bring into relief the decisive role played by mystics in moulding the race and in shaping the course of history. It will be discussed in detail elsewhere to show that no great gulf intervenes between a top-rank intellectual and a visionary, and that the irreverent attitude of many present-day intellectuals toward religion, and the idea of hidden spiritual potentialities in men, originates from a skeptical materialistic tendency of our time. The main factors that have contributed to the creation of an atmosphere of doubt, even mistrust, toward religion and the Beyond are, first, that religion because of the generally dogmatic attitude of its exponents has not been able to keep pace with the advance in material science, and, second, because the leaders of spiritual thought fail to demonstrate

the validity of their ideas and beliefs to the satisfaction of an unconvinced mind. If five hundred years before the birth of Christ, Gautama, the Buddha, had the intellectual acumen to find fault with the Vedas and to reject the metaphysical speculations of the Upanishads, which have an appeal for the erudite even today, how much more powerful must be the tendency in the modern intellectual, well aware of the recent revolutionary discoveries of science, and, at the same time, knowing the inanities, incredible beliefs, and irrational dogmas contained sometime in the Scriptures of all religions and other books of faith, to harbour doubts and misgivings in regard to the religious doctrine and practices to which he is asked to conform implicitly, without criticism or questioning.

Modern man, layman or specialist, is hardly prepared to accept that, at present, the dubiously regarded mystical state is the most exalted and most productive condition of the human mind. He still has to understand that the veneration commanded by men belonging to this category is not an accident or a creation of the visionaries themselves in order to gain a position of eminence but the outcome of a deeply rooted urge in human beings to show respect to one naturally endowed with a lofty attribute of the human mind necessary for the evolution of the race. Nor has he any inkling of the fact that this singular state of heightened perception can confer on those who attain to it such extraordinary powers of the spirit and mind as can prove of inestimable value in guiding mankind through the dangers of an uncontrolled technology and the hazards of a nuclear armament race. The ecstatic is the man *par excellence*, fashioned by nature to serve as a model for the multitudes, striving for happiness in a world still shrouded in darkness concerning the ultimate aim of human existence. If it is accepted that the transcendent consciousness, exhibited by many a prophet and seer of the past, is but a token of the lofty mental and spiritual outfit that will be the common heritage of the future man, the towering heights to which the outstanding personalities of the future will attain cannot even be imagined at present.

To avoid any ambiguity about the position presented in this volume, it is necessary to explain that the term *mystic*, as used here, includes every category of those men who, in one way or another, gain access to a transhuman state of consciousness and, by their own example and precept, furnish irrefutable evidence of extraordinary spiritual powers and intellectual gifts. The importance of this class of men, which includes all the well-known prophets, sages, and seers of the past, because of their exceptional talents, was thoroughly recognized in ancient times. The tragedy is that, on account of a grave misconception, widely prevalent in our time, namely, that man can know all that is worth knowing only by his intellect, people at large are under the impression that in temporal affairs a visionary is often out of place. The consequences of this misconception are obvious. Modern man still fails to make use of the spiritual potential present in him and depends too much on his intellect even in matters that are beyond its ken. The result is that, with all the amenities and luxuries provided by science, he lacks the possession of that peace and repose which are necessary for a fully satisfying and happy life. The lack of spiritual fulfillment in turn drives him to the use of undesirable surrogates, to alcohol, to drugs, to insatiable thirst for wealth and power, to sexual hyperaesthesia, and to other unsavoury practices and occupations in order to appease the unassauged natural hunger in his mind.

With the recognition of the important role performed by the prophet and the seer in ancient times, numerous methods were devised by different people to attain the exceptional states of mind peculiar to them. The thirst for the fulfillment of spiritual ambitions or the desire for magical powers or psychic gifts provided the incentives for such arduous undertakings. The most elaborate system of tried practices and disciplines employed for this purpose in any country is provided by Yoga. Keeping in view the surpassing nature of the metamorphosis that has to be effected, and the extraordinary results that flow out of it in the case of successful initiates, it is no wonder that Yoga was always surrounded by a halo that has persisted to this day. Only the

general ignorance about the extraordinary nature of the alteration in the personality of the seeker keeps the modern intellect from becoming an ardent admirer of the system. At the present moment, the usual run of people who take to Yoga, apart from the wholly devoted ascetic class, are those who, in addition to their normal avocations, practice it as a subsidiary effort either to gain psychic powers or success in their worldly ambitions or to acquire peace of mind amid the distracting conflicts of a competitive life. In some cases the aim is transcendence, or rapport with Divinity. A vast majority of the seekers of all these categories it can be readily observed, are of average and sometimes even below average mental capacity. Many of them lack those attributes of character and that tenacity of purpose which are essential for success in this extraordinary enterprise.

The doctrine of *kundalini*, the principal lever used in every form of Yoga, holds hidden beneath a large mass of mysterious formulas, strange practices, and rigid disciplines, inextricably involved in mythical verbiage, one of the greatest secrets of nature known to man. As already mentioned the term *Yoga*, employed in this volume, refers to all the methods that are known or that will be known in any part of the world, which are effective in leading people to supersensory states of consciousness and not merely to conventional systems of Yoga. In this broad sense Yoga is pregnant with a promise and a hope that far exceeds the highest expectations which its most enthusiastic adherents hold present. Yoga provides the only possible bridge between the visible world and the unseen, the only ladder to reach the glorious heights of self-knowledge, the only method to remedy the congenital defects of the brain or hereditary organic flaws of the body, and the only way to determine the direction of human evolution and the course of conduct men must follow to conform to it. The usual benefits associated with Yoga—peace of mind, transcendence, psychic gifts, and physical health—comprise but a fraction of the immense possibilities that it holds. The reason is simple. In his present way of life, man utilizes only a small

part of the psychic force residing in his body. The whole gamut of human progress achieved to this day, culminating in the visit to the moon, has been accomplished with the expenditure of this small amount of naturally available psychic energy, augmented from time to time in a few individuals by a trickle from the unused, hidden reservoir. Known spiritual prodigies and outstanding men of genius who, were they fashioned in a different way, could have utilized more of this psychic energy. They constitute the well-springs from which the first tiny rivulets of original thought, both material and spiritual, flowed forth to mingle together and become a gradually widening and swiftly flowing stream with the subsequent small additions made by diligent men from the grateful multitudes.

Our aim in extending the sphere of Yoga to include every healthy and systematic aspect of religious endeavour is to focus attention on this issue of paramount importance, from both the physical and the spiritual points of view, that all the phenomena associated with religion, Yoga and the occult, of every shade and shape, spring from the possibility existing in the human organism, to alter the output of psychic energy under certain conditions, leading to a phenomenal transformation of the inner man. In its more pronounced forms the transformation may lead to a state of unimaginable glory, to the ascent of consciousness from the narrow periphery of a gloomy basement to the breathtaking pinnacle of universal Consciousness, for the first time made cognizant of its own unbounded proportions and immortal nature. The first impact of this stupendous vision on the seers is formidable, and it is no wonder that, under the stress of the flood of emotion experienced at the breathtaking spectacle, some of them at once faint away. This glorious consummation of spiritual effort, though rare, has been achieved time after time by earnest seekers of all epochs and countries. The transformation can become a permanent possession of an individual, resulting in a life of such fulfillment, peace, and beatitude as one can only associate with the godlike denizens of a glorious paradise.

The tendency to divide mystical phenomena into several arbitrary compartments and to extol this compartment or that according to one's choice or inclination, springs from the fact that a high degree of ignorance still prevails about the basic fact responsible for them. Although, from the human point of view there is no fundamental difference between Western mysticism, Sufism, Taoism, or Yoga, there is a general tendency, sometimes even among the intellectuals, to treat them as separate and distinct from each other. The main reason responsible for this uncalled-for discrimination probably lies in the fact that as, in the main, mystical experience is associated with the various religions and cults, the common strongly marked tendency that has persisted unaltered from very ancient times to differentiate among creeds has naturally been extended to the sphere of mystical phenomena also. The wonder is that although no distinction is made in the phenomenon of genius, and all talented men who had this heaven-bestowed spark in them, belonging to any country and epoch, are grouped under one category, irrespective of the faith or of the fact that they were born in the East or the West, the gifted mystics, who were equally the recipients of a heaven-granted extraordinary faculty, and, in the same way, are the common asset of all mankind, are nevertheless divided into groups and categories or differentiated according to the faith which they profess.

The subject is too vast to be dealt with here and will be discussed in detail elsewhere. It is enough to mention that all human beings, belonging to any racial group or to any part of the earth have similar psychic and physiological reactions, the same emotions and passions, identical symptoms in bodily disease and mental disorder and, above all, the same construction of the various organs, the nervous system, and the brain. Yet some of the prevalent ideas, especially among the religious-minded and the credulous in respect to their approach to the Divine and the Transcendent, men, belonging to different faiths and different schools of spiritual discipline, are differentiated and regarded in dissimilar

ways and are, to say the least, infantile. They would have long since been labelled as blatantly ridiculous, but for the fact that they hold a large section of the believers still in their grip. If mystical experience is rooted in reality and is not merely a dreamlike condition of the mind, it must have a common basis, run a uniform course and have a uniform symptomatology and climax for all men, perhaps with slight modifications due to temperamental and constitutional differences, as every other psychic manifestation in human beings. It must be subservient to a law or several laws, and must constitute an activity for which provision already exists in the human organism. It can in no case be an arbitrary excursion of the human mind into unknown regions of consciousness, engineered by man himself, without any legal sanction from Nature or from God.

The beatific vision cannot be a vision of God or union with Brahman, the Absolute, for the simple reason that the mental equipment of man and the consciousness that filters through it are too fragile and too dim, not even comparable to the faint glimmer of a tiny glow-worm in an ocean of darkness, to have the capacity to apprehend, or to commune with, the Almighty Creator of this staggering universe. Considering the fact that consciousness exhibits itself on earth in an innumerable variety of forms, from the infinitesimal sentience of a cell to the flood of awareness in man, are we certain that no higher state of consciousness is possible on our globe and does not exist in any other part of the universe? If we are not sure of it, how can we then presume that man has attained the highest summit of knowledge and touched the border from where the exclusive conscious domain of God begins? It might be that what mystical experience represents, and what Yoga signifies, is the acquisition of or contact with a higher plane of consciousness, toward which mankind is slowly but inexorably evolving in a manner unknown to the scholars of this age. The transition from this state to the higher plane of consciousness might signify an ascent no less striking and no less wonderful than was the ascent from the anthro-

poised ape to man. All prophets, mystics, and seers as also those individuals (for instance Wordsworth) who had such experience without any specific religious discipline, might have had brief, long, or even permanent contacts with this higher plane of Being, which would seem as wonderful and as breathtaking as a sudden ascent to the level of human consciousness, with all its universe of thought and imagination, might have had for an ape.

This might be the explanation for all the supernatural and mystical phenomena exhibited, whether as an inborn gift acquired with some kind of discipline, from the dawn of reason to the present day. The explanation is not offered in a spirit of arrogance, nor as an infallible conclusion communicated by a supernatural source, but in all humility as a humble contribution to knowledge from one who has undergone the experiences, from the simple to those of a high order, witnessing many of the phases and objectively studying his own mental conditions and reactions for decades before deciding to place the results of his observations before the world—not for instant acceptance or outright rejection but for study and investigation. Many difficulties will crop up in the unqualified acceptance of this view from both religion and science. The present work does not provide the scope for discussion of the many implications of this view nor of objections likely to be raised.

The idea that in the ecstatic state of samadhi, the mystic yogi does not behold the Creator or the Absolute need not cause a shock to the religious-minded. In fact, a contrary view would be even more sacrilegious for the reason that it is nothing short of presumption on the part of man, with all his frailties and limited mental equipment, to suppose that he has reached the summit of evolution and there are now no intermediary stages, of perfection and intelligence between him and the Almighty Author of the universe. The mystics and Yoga saints themselves are divided over this important issue. From our present knowledge of the extent of the universe and the insignificant position occupied by earth, it is more difficult to maintain that

in the unitive state the contemplative apprehends, beholds, or becomes identified with the unimaginably powerful Lord of this creation, the sole Support of countless suns and planets and the refuge of countless forms of life throughout the universe, than to aver that the mystic state, or *turiya*, represents but another step on the ladder of evolution, raising man to a higher stratum of consciousness, with a tremendous enhancement in his powers of observation and with new channels of perception not exhibited by normal consciousness. The first transformation effected on his entry to this stratum is that he may become acutely aware of an all-knowing and all-pervasive state of Being, which may project itself on his perceptive faculty with or without a bodily form, entirely unlike anything known on earth. Whatever the nature of the vision or of the transformation witnessed in oneself, the unique, supernormal nature of the experience is unmistakable. The visionary now in touch with the stupendous, indescribable world of consciousness, interprets it as a contact with an almighty, omniscient Divine Being and may have the realization that the Being has entered into him or that he is one with It.

In actual fact what he perceives is himself with a highly enhanced supersensory form of awareness, in contact now with the subtle universe of consciousness that was previously impervious to his inner vision. The ecstasies and entrancements, the confusions and contradictions, the varied sensations and surmises, the diverse nature of the visions and values and the divergent interpretations placed on the experience by the mystics themselves, that present a dilemma for scholars, could never be a characteristic of the unitive state were it, in the real sense, a union between the Almighty and man. Anomalies, conflicts, and variations occur because the brain has to adjust itself to the new development. As the power of adjustment varies with different people and the experience is affected by their constitution, temperament, thoughts and fancies, religious and social environments, individual idiosyncrasies and suggestions of preceptors, it is no wonder that the whole phenomenon, at the present stage

of our knowledge of it, presents such a host of variations and incongruities that the bewildered intellect finds it difficult to assign its origin to the same cause. This does not mean that this transformation in man does not rise nearer to Divinity or that he does not develop divine attributes to attain this sublime state. He certainly rises higher in the scale of evolution, coming in possession of new talents and powers, with new channels of cognition and a new vision of the universe and his own life, and surely needs an all-round ethical development as a precondition to the ascent. But he is still far, far from God or the Absolute and even the apex of his own evolution. In the most perfect cases he can become a superman, an arhat, a Buddha, a prophet Saviour, a *jivan-mukhta* (one liberated in life), an adept, or illumined sage.

How does this incredible metamorphosis come about? What invisible psychic forces, activated by devotion, passionate longing, austerity, meditation, or other practices, are generated and come to the rescue of the soul to release it from its prison and raise it to a state of unparalleled glory and universal being? What carries it to the uttermost limits of knowledge and existence, so that nothing greater or more sublime can be known or experienced in human life? It cannot be, as is commonly supposed, an external agency, propitiated or invoked by these practices, which comes to the aid of the devotee to lift him up from darkness into light or from human to Cosmic Consciousness. What is more probable and more in accordance with the methods employed by nature, is that there must be something already provided in the soul-body combination we call man, still a source of wonder and mystery to the learned, which is capable of remoulding the whole organism with the help of a still unidentified Source of Energy hidden in the depths of the body, which is at the root of the transcendent phenomena exhibited by men. This something must also be the hidden power behind Yoga, the vast reservoir of psychic energy, designed by nature for the evolution of man, which, when channelled in the right direction, can work miracles

with his body and the brain to infuse him with a new life and a new consciousness. There is irrefutable evidence to show that this power mechanism has been known and manipulated in different ways to gain magical powers or transcendent states of consciousness from very ancient times, but so far no attempt has been made to dissociate it from the miraculous and the supernatural and to bring it within the orbit of a demonstrable natural law governing the evolution of the human race.

# 3

## ***Kundalini*, Fact and Fiction**

The general idea prevailing about *Kundalini*, in both the East and the West, is of a mysterious and fabulous power lying dormant in men, which, when roused to activity, can confer amazing psychic gifts and transhuman states of consciousness on the successful initiates. The belief is current in India and elsewhere that those, in whom the energy vivifies the seventh centre in the brain, are transmogrified and attain unlimited dominance over the forces of nature. This belief is fostered by the high claims made in the ancient literature on Kundalini-Yoga about the infinite possibilities for the elevation and deification of those who propitiate this divine power. The ascent of *Kundalini* from *Cakra*\* to *Cakra* is attended, it is said, with progressively increasing psychic powers until in the seventh centre the mortal becomes one with supreme Reality, or Lord Shiva, the Creator, Preserver, Destroyer of the three worlds. The Yogi, it is averred, gains limited powers of domination over men, fascination for women and sovereignty over the forces of nature. Thus in Mahanirvana

\*Cakra: In Yogic parlance Cakra signifies a centre of psychic force, to be existing on the cerebro-spinal axis, beginning from Muladhara root-support centre, at the base of the spine. The number of Cakras, as now generally held, is six through which Kundalini rises on its ascent to Sahasrara in the crown of the head. In the ancient texts these centres are depicted being circular in formation.

Tantra (vii. 39,40,41,50) it is said that he who worships the Adya-Kali (*kundalini*) Mistress of the three worlds “Becomes in learning like Brhaspati (the Guru of the Celestials), in wealth like Kubera (the god of riches). . . . Men bow with respect at the mere mention of his name. The eight *siddhis* (i.e., the power to become exceedingly large or extremely small or light as a feather, to float in space, or to become invisible to sight, or to enter the bodies of others, to be clairvoyant, clairaudient, or to have domination over all the forces, etc.), he looks upon as mere bits of grass.”

There is no end to the *siddhis* (supernatural powers) promised in the ancient writings to those who succeed in awakening *kundalini*. Thus in Sat-Cakra-Nirupana (vs. 21) it is said: “By meditating on this Navel Lotus (*Nabhi-Padma*) the power to destroy and create (the world) is acquired. Vani, (the goddess of speech) with all the wealth of knowledge ever abides in the lotus of his face.” Again in verse 31: “He who has attained complete knowledge of the Atman (Brahman) becomes, by constantly concentrating his mind (*citta*) on this Lotus, a great sage (*Kavi*), eloquent and wise, and enjoys uninterrupted peace of mind. He sees the three periods (past, present, and future), and becomes the benefactor of all, free from disease and sorrow, long-lived, and, like Hamsa, the destroyer of endless dangers.”

The possibility offered by the Tantric Sadhana to gain longevity, health, and miraculous powers seems to have been exploited to the full by the ancient exponents of the system to attract the attention of the multitudes and to gain followers for the cult. The promise of these extraordinary achievements was not extended to men only but also to women. Thus it is stated in Hathayoga-Pradipika (iii.102): “The woman who (with the practice of Vajroli Mudra), applying suction with her female genital organ) directs the reproductive secretion in the upper direction (i.e., draws it into the head), becomes a Yogini with the power to know the past, present, and future and to float in air.” I have quoted these passages to show that what many modern seekers expect from Yoga, in the wildest flights of their fancy,

is already offered in the old manuals and, according to some of them, can be had merely for the asking.

It is easy to see that the achievements are highly exaggerated, a common tendency among ancient authors, and that there is not only no end to the glowing promises held out but also undisguised contradictions in the statements. For while some emphasize lifelong effort and hard discipline to gain the favour of the goddess to achieve this or that *siddhi*, others consider mere efficiency in but one asana or in some single Pranayama or repetition (*japa*) of a *mantra* sufficient to gain the most rewarding supernatural gifts. The pity is that no attempt has been made to separate the chaff from the wheat, and in the current literature on the subject only the old rituals, down to the most obscene ones, the old practices, formulas, and promises are being interminably repeated without any effort at clarification to show what deserves credence and what should be rejected as mere superstition or exaggeration, impossible of acceptance in this rational age. It can be confidently asserted that there is a solid core of truth in the assertions of the ancient authors which has been so exaggerated and embellished that a doubt is cast over the whole system. What is more important, from the present-day point of view, is that this solid core has the unique possibility of providing empirical evidence for its support to the satisfaction of even the most skeptical of intellects. The aim of this work is to lay open this possibility by subjecting the ancient as well as the current ideas and theories about Kundalini-Yoga to a critical analysis in the light of modern knowledge about the human mind and body. The attitude adopted in India during the past several centuries in respect to the ancient treatises on Yoga, has been and still is one of uncritical acquiescence under the impression that the authorities are too lofty and the subject too sacrosanct to be critically examined in this profane age. This supine attitude has done no good to anyone but, on the contrary, has resulted in pushing into oblivion one of the greatest discoveries ever made by man, for the simple reason that the discovery at present is represented in a manner which is repugnant to commonsense.

It is unfortunate that there is no book on Kundalini-Yoga, written by a modern intellectual, well acquainted with the present-day concepts of science, based on his own experience of the divine power. Most of the writers on the subject either merely copy the ancient books or try to interpret the writings in the light of their own spiritual and metaphysical ideas. The nature of the mysterious force has not been defined or elucidated in a rational way in any treatise ancient or modern. The general impression about the awakening among those interested in the subject is, therefore, of a sudden leap from the visible world of rigid cause and effect to a transmundane state of existence where everything becomes possible; a dangerous position in this age of reason, fostered by writers with a predilection for the supernatural and the uncanny for whom every word of the ancient manuals has the weight of a gospel. Except for the nature of nerve energy, which carries out the multifarious activities of the body in a most amazing manner and every moment flashes thousands of signals from the various organs and limbs to the brain and vice versa, modern physiology has drawn an almost complete picture of the human frame, its organs and their functions, and no obscure region or crevice has been omitted, save for some portions of the brain and the spinal cord, about which knowledge is still extremely meagre. There is apparently no visible biological device in the body capable of generating a spiritual energy of the fabulous kind, as is mentioned in the literature on the subject. The organs at the base of the spine are the rectum and the sexual parts and their functions are well known. How can this area, the skeptics may reasonably ask, be the seat of a magical force which can effect such a radical change in the human system as to make it capable of superhuman feats?

The ancient exponents of this Yoga meet this obvious objection by the argument that *kundalini*, in the wider sense of the term, is the Cosmic Life Energy or *Prana-Shakti*, the source of all the Phenomena of life in the universe, and that in the microcosm, represented by man, She (*Shakti*), in a corresponding form, resides at the base of the spine in the form of a serpent, coiled three and a

half times, closing with her mouth the lower entrance to the passage leading to the abode of Shiva or Brahman in the crown of the head. In average men and women She lies asleep, or in a static form, i.e., coiled, conditioning the human consciousness that, forgetful of its own divine, immortal nature, it allows itself to be caught in the toils of the constantly changing, phenomenal world. When roused to activity with appropriate methods She, a streak of lightning, darts through the *Susumna*, clearing the darkness that holds the embodied spirit bound to the earth. According to the concept of the ancient authorities, therefore, *kundalini* is divine in nature, the superintelligent creative aspect of Lord Shiva, the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of the world, one with Him in the unmanifested state; but while He even in the unmanifested state continues to bide without any change or modification, unaffected by the emergence and dissolution of the Cosmic hosts, She, as the Creatrix, manifests Herself both as the objects and the energy that sustains them. “She is the Omnipotent Kala who is wonderfully skilful to create,” says Nirupana (vs. 12), “and is subtler than the subtlest. She receptacle of that continuous stream of ambrosia which flows from the Eternal Bliss. By Her radiance it is that the whole of this universe and this Cauldron is illumined.”

In fact for Her devotees She has the same absolute position and the same unlimited powers as are associated with God, Isvara, Allah, or Jehovah by the religious-minded. With such a conception of the divine energy (*kundalini*) it is no wonder that ancient authors have been most lavish in their praises and exhausted the power of their genius in investing her with all the attributes and all the powers—Omnipresence, Omnipotence, Omniscience—befitting the Creatrix and the absolute Ruler of the world. The reason for assigning an almost divine position to Gurus who succeed in establishing rapport with Her and investing them with all the virtues and unrestricted supernatural powers, befitting those who have won the favour of the Almighty Controller of the universe, thus becomes apparent. It is the same

old idea, expressed in a different way, that by propitiating the mighty Unseen Power behind the Cosmos through austerity, worship, and various other forms of spiritual discipline, one can attain the lofty position of a direct inner contact with Him, paving the way to superhuman attributes and supernatural powers, which is prevalent in almost all the existing great religions of mankind and which acted as a powerful guiding factor in primitive cults and religious practices as well. In the microcosmic form the all-powerful Creative Energy (*shakti*) is symbolized in the form of a coiled serpent, i.e., in a state of inaction, residing at the base of the spine in the human body. The aim of Kundalini Yoga is to awaken the serpent and to force her, stage by stage, to ascend the spinal canal, known as *susumna*, until She reaches the seat of Shiva in the highest centre in the brain. This ascent, it is stated, takes years to accomplish, though in exceptional cases only a short time, constantly attended by divine manifestations. At each of the five lower *cakras*, or lotuses, the ascending *shakti* dissolves one of the five primordial elements of which the visible cosmos is constituted (namely, earth, water, fire, air and ether) into the basic substance, which is consciousness, until after dissolving the mind and ego, which are also the forms of primeval *shakti*, the liberated spirit finds itself in ecstatic union with the Eternal Conscious Reality to which it owes its being.

Many modern writers on the subject have taken the same line and ascribe the phenomena associated with *kundalini* to the existence of a cosmic, astral, etheric, or psychic force without any biological connection with the human body, much in the same fashion as has been done in the ancient treatises. They override the physiological objections to the existence of lotuses on the spinal cord, or of any structure in the flesh resembling a coiled serpent at the base of the spine, or of the other objects mentioned in the ancient books by saying that all these formations on the spinal cord and brain, to which the ancient Scriptures refer with confidence have no tangible physical reality, but exist in the astral body or the subtle sheath of *prana*, surrounding the

physical frame. In the same manner the term *nadis*, frequently used in the treatises on Hatha Yoga, is held to signify channels of psychic energy or invisible *prana* that have no identity with the network of nerves, veins, and arteries distributed over the whole body. There can be no denial of the fact that the potent pranic current generated by the body, on the awakening of *kundalini*, is of such a marvellous nature, and acts with unerring precision and superhuman intelligence, that it reaches the province of the Divine; yet for all practical purposes all its physical and physiological bearings the foundation power firmly rests on the biological structure of the human frame. From the purely scientific view, therefore, some of the basic assumptions of Kundalini-Yoga have no existence in reality according to the interpretation put on the word *nadis* and *lotuses* by some modern authors. In other works, however, *nadis* are translated as arteries.

The *cakras* to which repeated reference is made by both ancient and modern writers and which, in fact, by constant use have become so familiar that the very name *cakra* has assumed the significance of *kundalini*, are held by some authorities to represent nerve plexuses of the central or autonomous nervous system, and by others as subtle vortices of *prana* energy, located at different places in the brain and the spinal cord, having no corporeal lineaments visible to the eye. They can be observed they say, only with internal vision acquired when Kundalini is awakened. These vortices are said to exist in the form of lotuses with a specific number of petals in each. The lotus in the lowest or *muladhara cakra* has four petals; the next above it, *svadisthana*, six; the *manipura*, or navel plexus, ten; the next above *anahata* or heart centre, twelve; the *visuddha*, or throat plexus sixteen; the *ajna cakra*, or the lotus between the eyebrows, two; and the last, the *sahasrara*, is said to be a lotus with a thousand petals situated in the cerebrum.

The total number of petals in the six lotuses from the *muladhara* to *ajna cakra* is fifty, which corresponds to the number of

letters in the Sanskrit alphabet. In fact, each petal of every lotus has a letter on it, which, all combined, form the Sanskrit alphabet or Varna-mala. In addition to the letters each lotus has a presiding *shakti*, or goddess, with a specific shape and colour. The Buddhist Tantrics recognize only four *cakras*, or lotuses, beginning at the umbilical cord and ending in the Usnisa-Kamla (lotus) in the head, corresponding to *sahasrara*. The other two correspond to the *anahata* and *visuddha* in the cardiac and laryngeal regions. In some ancient statues of Buddha the opened Usnisa-Kamala is depicted by a slight protuberance on the top of the head. The general impression prevailing at present that there are seven Cakras on the cerebro-spinal axis is of comparatively recent origin. In the early Upanishads only one, two, or three centres are mentioned, while in some texts dealing with *kundalini* ten, eleven, and even more *cakras* are described. The Brhadarnyaka-Upanishad (2.1.19 and 4.2.3) mentions only the heart-centre as the seat of origin of the *nadis* that carry *prana* energy to every part of the body. In his exposition of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Vacaspati Misra (i. 36) makes mention of the lotus of the Heart and Susumna; and Patanjali himself (iii. 29) refers to *nabhi-cakra* as a centre for concentration. The other *cakras* mentioned in Tantric texts are Yonisthana, Lalana, Manas, and Soma Cakras. According to Shiva-Samhita (ii. 28) besides the six Cakras there are five other centres with many names. In a comparatively recent Sanskrit work, Advaita Martanda, no less than twenty *cakras* are enumerated. Meditation on any one of the six Cakras, it is said, can lead to the arousal of *Kundalini*. Different psychic powers are associated with each *cakra*. The lotuses, the letters on their petals, the Bija Mantras, the presiding *Shaktis* with their appearance and accoutrements are clearly mentioned in the ancient texts, and vividly depicted on the illustrations drawn in ancient times. They present an intriguing and fascinating study that has largely contributed to arousing the curiosity of seekers about this form of Yoga from very ancient times to the present day.

The question that now arises is how far these descriptions of

Cakras, their lotuses, and other accessories correspond to reality and have a substratum of truth in them. To a scientific mind acquainted with the anatomy of the human body, the diagrams and the descriptions would at first sight strike one as the product of a brain which, to say the least, has lost touch with actuality and lives in a fantastic realm of dreams. It would dismiss the whole subject as entirely unscientific and irrational, the fanciful creation of deluded anchorites or of unscrupulous charlatans to deceive the credulous. In fact, even in India, the Tantric rites practices have been and are severely criticized by the followers of Vedic systems of ritual and worship. In view of this, it is difficult to imagine how impossible it is for a modern informed mind to reconcile the descriptions of the ancient masters, relating to the *cakras* and the lotuses, with the characteristics of the cerebro-spinal system contained in modern texts on physiology. It is not, therefore, to be wondered that the Yoga, dealt with in Tantras labours under a cloud, and that modern writings on the subject by adhering to ancient terminology and descriptions, instead of attempting to present this venerable system within the framework of modern knowledge, tend to render it more unintelligible and obscure.

In order to establish the existence of the power reservoir of *kundalini* on a scientific basis, acceptable to a strictly rational mind, it is absolutely necessary to explain the existing discrepancies in the accounts of different authors and to elucidate and reconcile the apparently fantastic and impossible assertions about the lotuses and the Cakras in order to clear the cobwebs that have grown around the subject in the course of the ages. The ancient, or the present, unrealistic mode of presentation of this Yoga might result in a progressively diminishing audience for time to come, and help the writers to maintain the illusion among a sector of the credulous and uncritical seekers for supernatural. But it can neither do any real service to this ancient system of religious discipline nor help to uncover the momentous discovery of the highest importance that lies concealed under the

cloak of weird formulations, fantastic creations and mythical beings. Considering the general ignorance concerning the basic facts of physiology prevailing during the past, and the superstitious awe with which the inexplicable phenomena relating to the mind and body were regarded, even by the intelligent and the learned in ancient times, it is not surprising that the ancient masters created a whole host of divinities and strange formations in the body to account for the bewildering effects caused by *kundalini*. But now a rational explanation is unavoidable.

Before taking up the issue of lotuses, described in lavish detail, let us confine ourselves to the discussion of the presiding *shaktis* that pervade the *cakras* and are meticulously portrayed in the ancient texts. A mere glance at their names, *Dakini*, *Rakini*, *Kakini*, *Sakini*, *Lakini* and *Hakini*, is enough to convey to any discriminating intellect that the appellations are crudely fabricated and can only deceive the ignorant or the extremely credulous. No rational man can even for a moment accept the existence of supernatural beings with such a string of designations that cannot fail to strike even the least informed as being artificial and fictitious. Some modern writers have tried to interpret these *shaktis* in terms of particular nerves dominating the various plexuses. If this interpretation is accepted we will have to accept the same interpretation for the lotuses as well, and also for such other creations of the ancient masters as appear improbable and fantastic to the modern mind. The experts who witnessed the phenomenon in themselves, completely baffled by the strange effects and weird displays produced by the impact of the newly generated vital currents at the various nerve junctions on the spinal axis, could not but attribute the mysterious happenings to the agency of various supernatural entities whom they designated as *shaktis* in keeping with the conception that the human body and the whole Cosmos were the manifestation of an almighty divine Energy, *maha-shakti* or *parameshvari*.

The association of the letters in the Sanskrit alphabet with the petals of the lotuses is another bald fact unacceptable to common-

sense. If the lotuses exist, even on the psychic plane, it is incredible that heaven should have so arranged their petals to correspond exactly to the number of letters used in the Sanskrit text. Whether they exist on the astral or the physical realm they could never be intended by nature to serve the purpose of one particular language to the exclusion of the others. There is no reason why the Chinese characters or Egyptian hieroglyphs or the cuneiform writing of the Sumerians or the script of the ancient inhabitants of the Indus Valley which are at least as old as Sanskrit, do not find any place on the lotuses, if they are really part and parcel of the human body, or even on the astral plane, an etheric or psychic counterpart of it, and not merely imaginary objects intended to convey some purpose about which we are in the dark at present.

The Bija-Mantras are no less inexplicable. The very nature of the sounds emitted by the *mantras*, *Ham*, *Vam*, *Yam*, *Lam*, etc., are a clear indication of the fact that they are fabricated and are as imaginary as the presiding *shaktis* and the letters of the alphabet. It is evident that when repeated interminably in a state of intense concentration, with diminished breathing heart action, they can serve effectively, with their nasal intonation and monotonous sonority, to induce a state of quiescence preceding the state of trance. Monotonous sounds have been used from prehistoric times and are even now employed by hypnotists and teachers of the occult to induce somnambulistic conditions. In primitive societies, in all periods of history down to times, monotonous chanting and weird music have always used to induce abnormal mental conditions and trancelike states in sensitive persons, susceptible to occult influences. The recitation of the Bijas or other Mantras, prescribed by the Guru, causes the same somnolent effect in the Sadhakas with a largely enhanced effect in combination with the other mental and physical exercises enjoined. It is easy to see that the Mantras of the class *Aim*, *Krom*, *Srim Svaha*, or *Hrim*, *Srim*, *Krim*, *Parameshvari* (Mahanirvana Tantra vi. 72-74 and 82) or others used in Tantric Sadhna are definitely of the hypnotic type.

It is obvious that the lotuses, the presiding *Shaktis*, the letters of the alphabet, the Bija-Mantras and other objects, as well as the diagrammatic formations meticulously described in the ancient manuals and shown graphically in the illustrations, have no real existence and are the mental creations of the masters to provide a physical representation for their teaching as well as to invest it with a certain amount of mystery, solemnity, and awe—all of them necessary ingredients of every effective religious practice and discipline. It has to be remembered that the system of Kundalini-Yoga is of great antiquity, probably extending to an epoch antecedent even to the Indus Valley civilization. It is a well-known fact that up to comparatively recent times even physicians had fantastic notions about blood, phlegm, menses, and the like, as well as about the organs and their functions, and maladies were often attributed to the evil influence of spirits, demons, and other diabolic supernatural sources. The people often resorted to exorcism, spells, and charms or other magical cures for even the most dangerous and virulent diseases which modern rational methods of treatment are now slowly bringing under control. In such a milieu of ignorance and superstition, it is no wonder that fantastic stories were current about the phenomenon of *kundalini*, and that its exponents should themselves have weird notions about the mysterious power. They made use of Hermetic methods and cabalistic signs, and peopled the whole region, from the base of the spine to the crown of the head (in which the impact of the force is felt) with strange objects and supernatural entities to account for the unusual manifestations. What other reaction could be expected to a rare and mysterious biological phenomenon which, even in our age of progress, has not been identified as yet, and, when located, is very likely to prove a difficult problem for the most learned?

Modern authors have drawn from writings that are centuries old, dating back to times when the world was still shrouded in the gloom of ignorance and the people were much more in the grip of the uncanny and the supernatural. It is a testimony to the rarity of the phenomenon that, in recent times, no adept of

this form of Yoga has appeared to recast the ancient treatises, in order to bring them in line with the enormous advances in psychology, physiology, and other branches of knowledge relevant to this subject. At the same time great credit is due to the ancient authors who, in spite of the handicaps under which they were labouring and the ignorance prevailing in their time, displayed a considerable knowledge of the nervous system, out of all proportion to the general level of the information available acquired no doubt by observing internally the movements of the luminous currents released by an awakened *kundalini*.

For a manual suited to the level of knowledge of the present day it is necessary to clarify the position in respect to these imaginary descriptions of the ancient authors and to concentrate only on the scientific implications of the phenomenon. A modern aspirant, burdened with the conventional details, would not only find himself on the horns of a dilemma, unable to reconcile the fully substantiated and thoroughly investigated findings of anatomy with the strange objects and mysterious beings said to be residing at different places on the spinal cord, but also see his efforts to decipher these hieroglyphics turning into a will-o'-the-wisp chase which can lead him nowhere. For the ancient seers to whom the enterprise was the main object of life, a long course of instruction in the mysteries and intricacies of the esoteric system was necessary to keep them engaged, and to instill a sense of reverence for the teacher and the subject, making it necessary for the former to embellish it with mythical divinities and enigmatic figures in order to sustain the curiosity and interest of their disciples.

This brings us to the basic issue of the reality of the Cakras themselves. Divested of the imaginary embellishments, what remains are concentrations of nerves, having a circular formation. Here we tread on solid ground, verifiable in terms of our present knowledge of the human body. For at the places, where the Cakras are said to be located, there are thick clusters of intersecting nerves which become at once recognizable when the pow-

erful stream of nerve energy, generated by *kundalini*, begins to circulate in the system. With a little more improvement in the delicate instruments that are now used to measure the electrical activity of the brain and the speed of nerve impulses, it might become possible at no distant date to detect variations in the quality and potency of nerve currents. When this comes to pass, the changes wrought in the nervous system by an active *kundalini* as well as the passage of the more potent current through the criss-crossing nerve junctions can be easily detected. Even at present more than sufficient evidence is furnished by the ancient writings, provided they are sanely interpreted, to show that, although the whole phenomenon is attributed to the activity of a superhuman power, the biological reactions that occur as a result of it are, to a large extent, understood and dealt with in proper ways in keeping with the level of knowledge of the times.

Some of the present-day exponents, unable to reconcile the lotuses and their accessories with the findings of modern physiology and caught in the labyrinth of ancient writings, interpret the term *nadis* as subtle channels of *prana*, different from nerves. They adopt a stand which is contradicted by the fundamental teaching of the Tantras themselves. All the disciplines of Kundalini-Yoga are directed towards Bhutta Shuddhi, i.e., for the purification of the five gross elements in the body. This purification can only be effected through the instrumentality of the bodily organs controlled by the nervous system and the brain. In fact, the whole armoury of Hatha-Yoga practices—Posture, *Shatkarma*, Concentration or *Pranayama*—is aimed to secure control or to improve the functions of the various organs with the ultimate object of gaining power over the vital processes of the body in order to force the arousal of the serpent power. When awakened, the live, pranic force, coursing through the nerves, effects the purification of the body and the transformation of the brain to make supersensory experience possible. When we readily acknowledge what is a matter of daily observation, that the spirit animating us, in spite of its divine nature, can act only on and by the

body through the brain, the nervous system and the complex of the biological organism, how can we then assume that any other divine agency can act on the same body effectuating radical changes and transformations, without the agency of the brain, the nervous system or other vital organs? If *nadis* are merely incorporeal channels of *prana*, through what channel then do the changes and the manifestations in the body occur? In the light of these facts it is not only against the spirit of the ancient writings, but also against the dictates of sense and the highly scientific nature of this venerable system to invoke superphysical and unverifiable agencies to account for a phenomenon that can be explained in strictly rational terms.

In his exposition of the Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali (iii. 32) Vacaspati-Mishra says that “the words (in the head) imply the (*nadi*), called *susumna*, and that Patanjali means *samyama* on that.” The words ‘in the head’ clearly indicate a location tube *susumna*, which establishes its corporeal nature. This is confirmed in Katha-Upanishad (11.3.16) in these words: “The nerves of the heart are a hundred and one in number. Of them the one (*susumna*) passes through the head. Going up through that nerve one achieves immortality. The others that have different directions become the cause of death.” Further confirmation comes from Brhadaranyaka-Upanishad (iv. 2.3): “And this human form that is in the left eye is his wife, Viraj (matter). This space that is within the heart is their place of union. The mass of blood which is in the heart is their food. What looks like a net within the heart is their covering. The nerve that rises upward from the heart is their passage for moving; it is like a hair split into a thousand parts. (Numerous) nerves (*nadis*) of this body called Hita, are rooted in the heart. It is through these that the essence of food passes when it moves. Hence the subtle body has finer food than the gross body.” It is the nerves that extract the finer essence from the body which circulates as psychic and nerve energy in the system.

This biological essence or individual *prana* is the connecting

link between the corporeal body and the incorporeal Cosmic Life energy. Again the same Upanishad states (iv. 3. 20): “In a man are these nerves (*nadis*) called Hita, which are as fine as a hair split into a thousand parts, and full of white, blue, brown, green and red (serums). . .” There can be no doubt that the reference is to the bodily nerves. It is no exaggeration to say that some of the nerve fibrils are as fine as the thousandth part of a hair. The colours are supposed to be due to the mixture of wind, bile, and phlegm in varying proportions, according to the prevalent notions of the time. Pancastavi (vs. 2) likens *kundalini* to the fine filament of the maidenhair fern, a very apt illustration for the slender nerve-fibres covering the human body. This view is again unequivocally confirmed by Hatha-Yoga-Pradipika (ii. 4) in these words “So long as *nadis* remain clotted with impurity the movement of *prana* does not occur through the middle passage (*susumna*) and so long as *prana* does not flow through *susumna* how can success attend the undertaking? In order to become affected by impurity the *nadis* must have a corporeal nature. *Pranayama* and other practices of Hatha-Yoga aim to remove this impurity.

Shiva-Samhita (2. 29,30,31,32) gives a graphic description of the anatomical arrangement of the nerves (*nadis*) which can leave no one in doubt about their physical character. In order to arrive at a correct evaluation of the accounts of the ancient authors it must be borne in mind that the descriptions cannot be as detailed and accurate as are contained in a modern manual of physiology for the reason that the structure of the body was an unfathomable mystery in their time, and though the pulse-beat was well known, the riddle of the flow of blood was still unsolved. Considered in the light of these facts this description of the nervous system singularly informative. It says: “Other *nadis* (besides *susumna*) rising from muladhara spread to the tongue, penis, eyes, big toes, the abdomen, armpits, thumbs, and lower limbs, and terminate there. From these *nadis* by the process of ramification and branching there arise 350,000 *nadis* existing at their respective places.

All these vital nadis are efficient in carrying *prana* (from one part to the other) and by division and multiplication are spread over the body.” The view expressed by Arthur Avalon and others that *nadis* are subtle channels of pranic or vital energy is thus not borne out by the statements contained in the ancient treatises. Once it is admitted that the term *nadis* used by ancient writers refers to nerves present in our flesh and blood, there should come a change in the concept of Kundalini-Yoga, the doctrine, coming down from the unverifiable planes of incorporeality, should touch the solid surface of earth as a verifiable biological phenomenon. All this possesses profound significance which will be explained elsewhere in this volume. Had the system of *kundalini* been elaborated by any other people independently, it is possible that they might have associated their own script with it in some way though not precisely in the manner, as has been done in India. In order to clarify this rather cryptic statement it is enough to mention here that as Revelation and Genius proceed from an awakened *kundalini*, and language is the main channel for the expression of both, the association of the Sanskrit alphabet or, for that matter, of any other alphabet, with the other symbolic representations of the mysterious Force is, therefore, a perfectly natural process. Since this relationship, though well known to the ancient masters, has not been explicitly brought out in any ancient treatise, not one of the modern expositors of this Yoga, in spite of deep study and search, has been able to understand or explain its significance, which is of a paramount nature. The tendency to cover the science of life with a mantle of superstitious ritual, mythical personages, mysterious happenings and miraculous powers, representing an earlier stage in the development of the human mind, seriously retards instead of advancing, in this age of widespread knowledge and progress, the cause of this most important doctrine, which rationally approached and critically examined, can prove to be a veritable mine of surprises and new discoveries for both the seekers after God and the votaries of science.

It is a matter of common observation that we live in two worlds, one physical and the other spiritual. The visible universe and our bodies are made of this physical stuff, but our thoughts and consciousness are formed to be of an intangible substance about which, even in this era of phenomenal progress in knowledge, we as yet know next to nothing. This subtle world of thoughts, fancies and dreams is as basic a fact of our experience as the physical universe, and is decidedly nearer and more intimate to us than the latter. But it is so inextricably linked up with every cell and fibre of our flesh that it appears to be an inseparable product of our physical body. It is true that if consciousness and thought are self-existing substances, and not merely the products of cellular activity, they should have an independent existence as well as spheres of activity of their own, but viewed from our experience this holds true only in the abstract. For we never perceive consciousness or thought operative without the vehicle of flesh. It is precisely here that *kundalini* plays a decisive role. As if alive to human aspirations at a certain stage of intellectual development, far-sighted Nature has planted a divine mechanism in the human body, which by effecting an alteration in the vital energy, or *prana*, feeding the brain, can bring the amazing universe of consciousness within the range of awareness of an awakened man.

The whole science of *kundalini* is based on the manipulation of *prana-vayu*, the nerve junctions (*cakras*), and the brain. *Vayu* in Sanskrit means *air* and the word is used with *prana* to denote its subtle nature. *Prana* and *vayu* are, sometimes, interchangeably used by the ancient authors to designate nerve energy or vital breath. Although *prana* is a self-existent substance, deathless and all-pervading, yet its manifestation in the bodies of terrestrial creatures is rigidly regulated by biological laws. In fact, the whole kingdom is the product of the activity of *prana* and the atoms of matter both combined. *Prana* is not something radically different from matter, but both are derivatives from the same basic substance, *para-shakti* or Primordial Energy. At the present

stage of our knowledge nothing would be more ridiculous to suppose that this combination of *prana* and matter which resulted in such marvellous organizations of living creatures be so flimsy and unstable as to yield readily to the human will. The impression prevailing in the minds of some people that a few minutes' exercise of concentration can work miracles in changing one's existing level of consciousness with the arrest of *prana* and thought is, therefore, as correct as it would be to suppose that repeated light hammer-blows dealt to a metal can lead to the release of atomic energy. An overhauling of the entire human body is necessary to effect a radical transformation of consciousness from the normal to the supersensory level. This is the reason why real success in Yoga is so very rare. The position is that a large proportion of even those who take to the study and practice of Yoga are, not infrequently, are themselves ignorant of the Herculean nature of the enterprise that confronts them, and the marvellous transformation of consciousness that can occur by this means.

The ancient writers have made no secret of this formidable task, impossible of achievement through human effort alone. Only because nature has provided a contrivance in the body, susceptible of stimulation by certain methods, does the far-reaching change in the state of consciousness envisaged by Yoga become possible. There is another unalterable condition. The nervous system of the initiate must already have attained a certain degree of preparedness, through heredity and a right mode of life, before the manipulation or even the activity of the contrivance can be effective enough to bear the desired fruit. It is because of the formidable and unpredictable nature of the enterprise that the ancients have likened the mysterious *kundalini*, the key to this mechanism and power centre, to a coiled serpent lying asleep on the Manda, a triangular space with its apex downwards located in the region bordering the lower end of the spinal column. Although there is some variation in the accounts of different authors about the location of Kanda, the seat of *kundalini*, all are agreed

that the region lies somewhere between the perineum and the navel. The location of the *muladhara* and the other *cakras* is also meticulously described, though there are slight variations in these accounts also. These facts also clearly show that *kundalini*, being localized in space, must be a physiological contrivance, and, therefore, the channel or *nadis* through which it operates must also have a physical existence. How the whole region associated with *kanda* becomes active on the awakening of the serpent powers radiating energy to all the vital organs and centres, to effect rejuvenation of the body and elevation of mind will be described in another place in this volume.

In the light of these facts it would be a mistake to suppose that because the accounts of *nadis* do not exactly tally with our present chart of the nervous system, and because the alleged existence of the lotuses and other objects at the *cakras* has no substance in reality, the allusions made to them in the Tantras and other manuals on Kundalini-Yoga do not refer to the nerves made of flesh but to hypothetical channels of life energy interpenetrating the human body. If such were the case, then instead of suggesting the arduous and even dangerous practice of *pranayama*, which directly affects both the autonomic and the central nervous system, combined with postures, *mudras* and *bandhas* that are unequivocally physical exercises, the ancient masters would have contented themselves with recommending purely mental exercises to stimulate channels that had no corporeal reality, and could, therefore, be approached only through the medium of the mind. That from prehistoric times complicated, laborious, and painful psychosomatic methods have been used provides unmistakable evidence that the mechanism to be stimulated has an objective and concrete reality. When the mechanism has a corporeal existence the effects of its stimulation must have the semblance of psychic or biological activity, like the activity of any other organs in the body. That it is so will become progressively apparent in the succeeding chapters in this volume.

It is true that universal *prana* is a superphysical substance like

mind, but it has a tangible organic medium by which it acts on living organisms through specific channels of activity, that is, the cerebro-spinal system. We know very well that the brain is the instrument for the expression of mind. The only way by which we can come in contact with the supersensible realm of mind is by tuning the brain to finer vibrations not perceptible in the ordinary way. Whatever the method used to achieve the objective—whether meditation, *pranayama*, *mantra*, or prayer—in every case the organ stimulated or affected is the brain or some specific portions of it about which we are still in the dark. What effect the training or tuning has or what changes occur in the nerves or grey and white matter we do not know, but of this we have no doubt: all our practices and techniques finally impinge on the brain. The same is true word for word in the case of excitation of *kundalini*. *Prana* acts on our body through the nerves and the brain. It is, therefore, necessary in order to reach *kundalini* to direct our efforts to the training and tuning of both of them, which is exactly what the ancient authorities prescribe for the aspirants. For the arousal of *kundalini*, and for her subsequent activity, the somatic channel of the cerebro-spinal system is as necessary as the cultivation and development of the brain is necessary for the better expression of thought. Uncritical acceptance of the existing accounts, instead of elucidating, has made the subject more obscure and complicated and resulted in lending currency to false and misleading notions about this mighty power. The extent to which even the learned have been carried away by the cryptographic descriptions and cabalistic signs and diagrams is surprising. The common man has thus imbibed entirely erroneous ideas about this force, treating it as a supernatural power which, when propitiated or evoked with Yoga practices, puts an Aladdin's lamp into the hands of the fortunate Sadhaka to do with it as he likes.

Viewed apart from this huge and misleading mass of *cakras*, lotuses, shaktis, serpents, *mantras*, and other mythical creations, of the human mind and interpreted in the light of modern knowl-

edge, all that has a semblance of plausibility, and which we can accept subject to investigation, is the rather startling fact that the human body in the region close to the base of the spine has a reservoir of vital energy which, when activized with certain tried methods, leads to amazing changes in the human level of cognition, making the brain responsive to higher states of existence or to other dimensions of consciousness. This is a most extraordinary experience that has left its mark on history almost every time it became the destiny of the one who almost invariably blossomed into a prophet or an illumined sage. And this is not all. For the expression of a transcendent state of Consciousness a highly developed body, a superior nervous system and brain are the prerequisites demanded by nature to effect the transformation. The promises held out in the ancient texts about health and longevity are, therefore, to some extent, rooted in fact. Supernormal psychic gifts, such as prophecy and clairvoyance, as well as the power of fascination and magnetic appeal, also become available to the successful initiates within certain limits. This in a nutshell is the message of the Tantras and all the ancient treatises dealing with *kundalini*. In fact, as has been already explained, this is the aim and object of every form of Yoga, and every religious discipline. For the ultimate target of every occult or religious practice is to bring the mind in tune with Cosmic Consciousness or the Infinite Universe of Life, hidden from the normal mind. Supernormal psychic gifts, enhanced intellectual calibre, and literary talents invariably attend the crowning stages of the metamorphoses brought about.

The region contiguous to the base of the spine is lined with thick clusters of nerves and also forms a junction of a large number of arteries and veins. The nerves lining it come from both the central and the sympathetic nervous systems. This central area of the body forms the seat of the reproductive system in both men and women. There can be no denying the fact that life, in its initial stages, is generated by this region and that from it arises the sexual impulse which has a most powerful

effect on the brain. It is the seat of mystery and romance, of the yet unfathomed potentialities of life, of creativity as also of mental twists and obsessions of which psychology has only now begun to explore the depths. This part of the human anatomy has been an object of ceaseless speculation from the remotest epochs. It is often the first portion of the body to excite the curiosity of the child. It has been designed by Heaven, for reasons best known to it, to discharge, besides its normal function of procreation, the still nobler purpose of evolution, in conjunction with a specific centre in the brain and a host of nerves, employed to extract the Elixir of Life from all parts of the body for transmission through a narrow duct in the spinal cord. This upward flow of the nerve energy, partly used for reproduction (*Urdhava-retas* in Sanskrit), forms the basis of Kundalini-Yoga. In fact, it is the ultimate aim of every form of Yoga, practiced for the attainment of transcendent states of consciousness. How the Elixir is transformed into a more powerful nerve current, which nerves are involved in this operation, what region of the brain is most affected, and how the transformation of consciousness takes place, are questions which, to answer, would need the devoted labour of countless savants in times to come for a thorough exploration of what is one of the most momentous secrets of Nature, underlying religion and every form of religious discipline, including Yoga. If we accept as true even a tithe of what the ancient masters claim for Kundalini-Yoga—superconsciousness, psychic powers, longevity, radiant health, genius, and a host of other gifts and talents—this points to a hidden source of energy and strength in the body, so marvellous, so potent, and so precious for the peace and happiness of mankind that no price paid for it and no sacrifice made to acquire the secret would be too great.

# 4

## Yoga, True and False

According to some authorities on Yoga, one very essential qualification that should be present in an aspirant is *viveka* (discrimination). The person must be able to make up his mind as to what is of real worth or of a permanent nature and what is unsubstantial and transitory. How necessary *viveka* is on the path of liberation is expressed by Sankaracarya in Viveka-Cudamani (147) in these words: “This bondage can be destroyed neither by weapons nor by wind, nor by fire, nor millions of acts (enjoined by scriptures): by nothing except the powerful sword of knowledge that comes of discrimination (*viveka*), sharpened by the grace of the Lord.” It is easy to see that as long as the aspirant has not a correct sense of values and does not possess, in ample measure, the faculty to determine what is really beneficial for him and what is not, there is no possibility of his success in a difficult enterprise like Yoga. *Viveka* is thus the very foundation stone on which the subsequent efforts of an earnest seeker come to rest for the simple reason that he himself has to make the choice of and the path he would like to pursue to reach it. Study of books and scriptures or the advice of scholars and teachers can only help to bring to his mind a whole bag, full of different goals and different paths designed to reach them, advocated by different

authorities, each of them as learned, as pious, and as convincing as the other. But the choosing has to be done by the seek according to his own ability and his own power of discrimination irrespective of what is suggested by others. It is here that the crux of the endeavour lies, for all the future harvest of his efforts depends on his choice.

In the search for a career, in the selection of a partner, embarking on a hazardous worldly enterprise do we not think deeply and debate within ourselves for days and weeks consulting our friends and well-wishers, before making the final decision in the light of what appears to us most appropriate under the circumstances? What then should be our attitude when we try to reach God, the Author of Creation, or when to gain entry to higher planes of consciousness which, as long as we have not found access to them, are deeper than the bed of an ocean and farther than the farthest object on earth? If we have a genuine urge for this quest, should we not then wholeheartedly devote ourselves first to a deep study of the literature on this subject, especially to a study of the lives and utterances of those who are reported to have achieved the goal, to find out what kind of men they were, what obstacles beset them on the path, and what the reward was for their efforts, sacrifices and sufferings at the end? This study, combined with a study of a few scriptures, as for instance the Bible, Quran, Bhagavad Gita, Dhammapada, or any other Buddhist testament, will probably be enough to develop sufficient insight in an earnest seeker to enable him to determine the nature of the goal he should set before him and what he might expect at the end if his sincere efforts bear any fruit. If the approach to Yoga is made in this way, after weighing all the pros and cons, the conceptions about this science, in the minds of most people in both the East and West will undergo a radical transformation leading to a more healthy and sober view about this holy enterprise. It will then cease to have magical properties with which people invest it, and emerge as an objective reality with its full share of hazards,

difficulties, disappointments and distractions, as any other enterprise undertaken by man.

The rarity of a successful consummation in Yoga is mainly due to the fact that most of those who embark on it have often no clear-cut picture of the desired goal, how they themselves should be equipped for it, or what they should expect on the way. They usually accept the versions of the teachers whom they approach for guidance and who are often themselves unaware of the real goal and the path. They proceed to sit in the postures and to perform the other exercises as instructed by such teachers. In this way they bring down to the level of a mechanical, physical, or mental drill a system of discipline that is designed, in its true form, to reach down to the deepest levels of the human mind in order to effect radical changes in the whole psychological makeup of an individual. Commenting on the qualifications needed in a seeker for enlightenment, Updésa-Sāhasri writes: "This is always to be taught to one who is of tranquil mind, who has subjugated his senses, who is free from faults (of character), obedient, endowed with virtues, always submissive (to the teacher), and who is constantly eager for liberation."

Discrimination and dispassion are two of the most essential attributes needed in a Sadhaka, and every Indian scripture has accorded the highest priority to them. "But he (that master of the chariot i.e., body)," says the Katha-Upanishad (1.3.7), "does not attain that goal, who being associated with a nondiscriminating intellect and an uncontrolled mind, is ever impure. He attains only worldly existence (involving birth and death)." During the probationary period, spent by the disciples with their teachers in India in ancient times, the latter had full occasion to frame their opinion about the merits of each disciple in the light of the injunctions contained in the sacred texts. This is clear from several passages in the Upanishads, as for instance Mundaka-Upanishad (1.13): "To that pupil who has approached him with due courtesy, whose mind has become perfectly calm and who has control over his senses, the wise teacher should truly impart that

knowledge of *Brahman* by which one realizes the Being, imperishable and real.”

The Bhagavad-Gita repeatedly draws attention to the mental qualifications of the aspirants and time after time emphasizes the fact that without the basic virtues of detachment, self-mastery, devotion, faith and intellectual discrimination, success in the search for liberation is not possible. Self-control has to be acquired first before the actual practice of Yoga is started, “Pledged to the vow of continence, fearless, keeping himself perfectly calm and with the mind thoroughly brought under control and fixed on Me” says Krishna to Arjuna (iv. 14), “the vigilant Yogi should sit absorbed in Me.” Again in vi. 36, He says: “Yoga is difficult of achievement for one whose mind is not subdued, but it can be easily attained with practice by him who with his mind under control ceaselessly strives for it; such is my belief.” These citations make it abundantly clear, without the least trace of ambiguity that a finely adjusted intellect, able to guide the Sadhaka in choosing his goal and his way of life and conduct is an indispensable prerequisite for the experience of Yoga. As at present Yoga is more or less an individual effort, with a great diversity in methods and innumerable exponents, each loud in the praise of his own method, the selection of a teacher needs the same fine exercise of the intellect as in all other matters. If this selection not made with proper care there is every possibility of a failure even in the case of one who, after deep study and thought, has made the choice of the goal and the path which he would like to take.

This brings us to the very heart of the problem we wish to discuss. Since the time the various kinds of disciplines used in Yoga were first practiced or prescribed, a great transformation has occurred in the way of living, mode of thinking and social environment of people. The basic qualifications demanded for Yoga need a mode of life and certain attributes of mind, as for instance renunciation, self-denial and devotion, which are incompatible with the requirements of the present highly competitive

and fast-moving age. The more sophisticated teachers, therefore, instead of advising their disciples to cultivate these essential attributes, and to adopt a concordant mode of life, make futile attempts to adapt the ancient teaching to the present highly artificial and competitive social order, often with disastrous consequences. The scope of this volume does not permit us to pursue this issue in detail. It is sufficient to point out here that there is gradually occurring a growing dissonance between the fundamental concept and practice of Yoga, as it was taught at the height of its spiritual practice in India in the past, and as it is now presented to the world. The impact of this calculated distortion has been especially harmful in the West for the reason that the seekers, having often no grounding in the scriptural lore of India, lack the necessary insight to differentiate between what the revealed texts prescribe and what the modern exponents try to inculcate.

From very early times there have been three classes of religious teachers and those dealing with the occult among whom it is necessary to distinguish in order to avoid waste of effort and disillusionment. One of the classes consists of those deeply versed in the sacred lore who have made themselves fully conversant with the details of various esoteric systems and religious disciplines, even practiced them, and who possess the ability to impress others with their knowledge and discourse. The second class comprises those who have diligently practiced the disciplines, possess or cultivate needed virtues, and who, as a result of long, ceaseless effort, attain a tranquil state of mind, have visionary experiences and develop, or are naturally gifted with, psychic powers, such as mind-reading, clairvoyance, etc., which they exhibit on occasions to instill respect in their followers. The third class, extremely limited and rare, consists of those who either as the result of a short or a long course of discipline, combined with lofty mental traits, an austere mode of life and exceeding benevolence of disposition, or as a natural endowment, attain the beatific State through psychic gifts, flashes of illumination and inspira-

tion, and remain more in rapport with an entrancing inner rather than outer world. All systems of Yoga are designed to produce the mental state prevailing in the third category, which, because of the numerous factors involved and the radical nature of the transformation to be effected, becomes fruitful only in a few cases out of thousands who apply themselves to it.

The other two categories work with the light borrowed from the third, just named, which consists of a genuinely illuminated class of men. The reason why they sometimes come to the forefront is because the phenomenon of true spiritual efflorescence is extremely rare. "Out of thousands of men," says the Bhagavad Gita (vii. 6) "hardly one strives for perfection and out of thousands of such seekers hardly one in reality attains to Me (Krishna as the Universal Self)." How difficult is the path for which enlightened teachers of the highest calibre are needed is described by Katha-Upanishad (1.3.14) in these words: "Arise, awake, and learn by approaching the Excellent Ones. The Wise describe the Path to be as impassable as a razor's edge, which when sharpened is difficult to tread on." Because of the fact that human beings in general, are at different stages of development, both intellectual and moral, as they stand on different steps of the ladder of evolution, and have different tendencies and appetites, they have different ideas about perfection and the Ultimate as well, and are motivated by different aims in the quest for spiritual experience. Some seek worldly success and fulfillment of carnal desires with the aid of the magical gifts they hope to gain by this means. Others hanker after position and power and strive for the development of a magnetic personality, able to command the obedience of sundry people with the occult influences they will be able to radiate. Yet others are hungry for psychic gifts and supernormal faculties, clairvoyance, levitation and the like, and there are others who desire health, longevity, and a peaceful frame mind under all circumstances. Few, indeed, there are who have actual knowledge of the real goal of Yoga and who long for the supreme experience, subordinating every other consideration and directing every other effort to this lofty aim.

Magic has been an ingredient of religion from the earliest times. In fact, in the “primitive” stages religion is indistinguishable from magic so much so that some scholars, among them J. G. Frazer, trace the origin of the former to it. Magic was much in evidence in India during the Vedic period and echoes of it are found in the Upanishads also. Thus in Brhadarnyaka a magical remedy is suggested to an injured husband (6.4.12) in this way: “Now if a man’s wife has a lover and he wishes to hurt him, he should feed the fire in an unbaked earthen vessel, spread tips of reed inversely (to the usual way) and offer these inversely placed tips of reed, smeared with ghee (clarified butter), in the fire, uttering the following Mantras: ‘Thou has offered in my burning fire thy *prana* and *apana*, I take them away, etc.’ . . . ‘Thou hast offered in my burning fire thy sons and cattle, I take them away, etc.’ . . . ” Patanjali has devoted the third book of his Yoga-Sutras to the enumeration of the supernormal gifts and miraculous powers attainable through the practice of Yoga. The Tantras and books on Hatha-Yoga are filled with magical rites, spells, charms and exercises for the attainment of fabulous powers and supernatural gifts. These excursions into the realm of magic and the miraculous, even on the part of great adepts of Yoga, have a profound relevance to human nature, since a large proportion of humanity has an innate propensity for the miraculous and the supernatural. In many cases this propensity is so strong that no amount of argument or dissuasion, and even no amount of proof to the contrary, can convince them that the domain of the supernatural is still shrouded in the darkness of doubt and suspicion, sometimes even trickery and fraud, and that demonstration of miraculous or magical powers by a person has seldom, if ever, been beyond dispute. In any case, it has never brought to him or to those who were benefited any lasting credit or good.

Accepting human nature as it is, the teachers of the two lower categories adapt their teaching to suit the predispositions of those whom they teach. The desire for supernatural adventure and the acquisition, of miraculous powers, the subconscious longing in the

heart of many people who take to Yoga and other occult practices, find a response in countless books, published in these days, which provide them liberally with many varieties of brightly coloured and highly embellished foods, suited to their tastes. The old Tantric and Yoga texts of India and Tibet provide the raw material from which these appetizing dishes are cooked. The outcome has been that cheap and dangerous methods are taught to the unwary, and Yoga, brought down from its high pedestal, been made a saleable commodity which anyone can purchase for a price. Hypnotism, suggestion, drugs, magic, legerdemain, Mantras and every other device known to man to excite curiosity for and to stimulate interest in the miraculous and the occult are all freely used by those who trade in the supernatural. The discriminating power of a balanced intellect, considered indispensable by the ancient masters for the right choice of the teacher and the path adopted, has been replaced by what is the most powerful incentive in this age: the possibility of gain. The aspirants seldom suspect that when a Guru breathes a Mantra into their ear and instructs them in meditation in a certain way, with the injunction that they should practice it daily in such-and-such a manner to gain such-and-such results is, without their knowledge, planting a suggestion deep into their subconscious and dealing with them in the same way as some mental healers and psychiatrists deal with the crowds of patients who throng their clinics or gather round them for treatment. The seekers after Yoga and the occult who, instead of counting on their own efforts, guided of course by a preceptor, display a weak mental attitude of utter dependence on the teacher for their spiritual regeneration, show evidence of lack of character and an unhealthy thirst for the Divine. Those who believe that they can attain to higher states of consciousness in this way, or by adopting any novel or easy method, deceive themselves and indirectly tend to cast a shadow of doubt and disrepute on this ancient science.

Hypnotism and suggestion have played a powerful role in all religious and occult practices from early times. The magic rites

of the primitives and the occultists of Egypt, Chaldea, Greece, and other old civilizations made use of them in ample measure. The disciplines of Yoga contain a strong element of autohypnotism and suggestion in them. The attainment of a state of transcendent consciousness, which crowned the labours of most of the famous mystics, sages, and Yoga saints of the past, is a unique phenomenon, attended by certain well-marked attributes that can be objectively verified. In other cases, where the practitioners of spiritual disciplines including Yoga, perceive visions, have supernatural visitations, or believe they have attained a state of mental calm, without developing the other talents which will be discussed in another chapter of this volume, and without experiencing a noteworthy change in their whole personality, are not infrequently experiencing the effects of autosuggestion, or the suggestion of an instructor that has gone home into the subconscious. Commenting on this possibility in the cases of conversion in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*\*, William James writes: "Similar occurrences abound, some with and some without luminous visions, all with a sense of astonished happiness, and of being wrought on by a higher control. If, abstracting altogether from the question of their value for the future spiritual life of the individual, we take them on the psychological side exclusively, so many peculiarities in them remind us of what we find outside of conversion that we are tempted to class them along with other automatisms, and to suspect that what makes the difference between a sudden and a gradual convert is not necessarily the presence of divine miracle in the case of one and of something less divine in that of the other, but rather a simple psychological peculiarity, the fact, namely, that in the recipient of the more instantaneous grace we have one of those subjects who are in possession of a large region in which mental work can go on subliminally, and from which invasive experiences, abruptly upsetting the equilibrium of the primary consciousness, can come."

It is undeniable that some cases of Yoga end merely in auto-

\*Longmans, Green, New York, 1903.

hypnosis by causing the same condition of the brain as is deliberately induced by hypnotists in their subjects. Since some people are much more responsive to the hypnotic influence than others, follows that the same rule must be true in respect of autohypnosis also, and that the more susceptible individuals succeed in inducing the condition in themselves more easily than others. Regular practice in a secluded place, a steady unmoving posture that can persist even when the mind passes into a sleeplike state, rhythmic breathing with soporific resonance proceeding from the monotonous utterance of specially selected words, fixity of attention or vacuity of thought create the passive or fatigued condition of mind, favourable to the hypnotic trance. The idea already existing or inculcated about the Deity or the Superconscious state, acting as a suggestion, and using the now vivid imagination of the self-hypnotized Yoga practitioner, can create a hallucinatory appearance corresponding to it which has all the semblance of reality for him in the same way as a picture, evoked by the suggestion of a hypnotist, has for the moment a real existence for his subject. The vision is naturally accompanied by a state of happiness at the fulfillment of an earnest desire, which is reflected on the countenance of the Yogi.

Many of the secret rites and hidden practices, prescribed by esoteric systems and occult creeds as well as many exercises of Yoga, are but effective methods of self-hypnosis in disguise. They cause the practitioner to fall into a state of mental passivity leading to trance. The daily repetition of the experience tends to fortify belief in the reality of the vision and to create an assurance that the practitioner has found what he had striven for. This assurance has a powerful effect in creating self-confidence in and in influencing his followers and disciples. Once the ability to induce hypnosis in himself has been gained by a Sadhaka, the next step of exhibition of psychic talents becomes possible soon afterward in a certain proportion of successful initiates. They may succeed in awakening extracerebral memories relating to the past or in exhibiting clairvoyance, prevision or other supernormal gifts.

As these extrasensory developments do not occur in all successful cases of self-hypnosis but only in a few, in the manner of hypnotized subjects, it is obvious that the condition supervenes only in such cases where a tendency already exists in the brain in a dormant form and only needs some stimulus to stir it and bring it out.

This class of Yogis and occultists, though much more numerous than the true Yoga saints and mystics, and existing from prehistoric times, has made no impact on mankind, though in their own circumscribed environment men of this category shine brilliantly for a while. The reason for this is simple. They do not possess the ever-shining light of genius nor the dynamic power of the soul to shed a lustre that could survive beyond the narrow span of their lives. Apart from the fact that they can induce the condition in themselves, and on that account possess confidence in their own ability to cause the phenomena, Yogis of this class are in other respects no better than hypnotized subjects or professional sensitives and mediums, whose demonstrations are witnessed by thousands every year. It is a mistake to suppose that they can produce these extraordinary phenomena at will and mould the occult forces of nature according to their choice. If it were so and they did possess the power of command over these forces, they could dispel the doubts of the multitudes with but one conclusive supernatural demonstration before the skeptics, whose number is alarmingly on the increase, and with but one bodily flight in the air, while the cameras are recording and thousands of eyes witnessing the feat, revive belief in the occult for at least many centuries to come. But no such demonstration has ever been ventured, nor is likely to be ventured for a long time to come. It can be readily admitted that there are hidden powers and occult forces in nature about which modern scholars are still in the dark. But, as in the case of material energies, they too must be governed by rigid and uniform laws. They await the time when man can make lawful use of them with full understanding of their nature and possibilities. Till that day the erratic exhibitions, witnessed in mediums

and others, can only be treated as freakish occurrences, which in the course of time, with study and investigation, may lead to better understanding of their origin and the purpose they serve.

The material phenomena, attributed to prophets, mystics, Yogis, though counterfeited to some extent by mediums and sensitives in their séance chambers during recent times, have never been conclusively demonstrated. They have never even been unequivocally proved in the past, because if this had been done it would have shut, once and for all, the mouths of the skeptics and believers who at no time in history ceased to cast doubts on the Divine and the supernatural. To what extent the skeptical attitude was in evidence in the past is also amply illustrated in the dialogue of the Buddha in which he explicitly states that the exhibition of supernatural feats on the part of one on a spiritual path instead of enhancing his reputation is more likely to result in his classification as a mountebank and trickster. It is said that when informed by a disciple that a certain monk had flown up to that of a high pole, and thence circled the town three times, to win a sandalwood bowl, which a rich merchant had placed on the top of the pole with the proclamation that one who could take it there would possess it, Buddha ordered the bowl to be broken into pieces and distributed.

Leaving aside the psychics and mediums, some of whose exhibitions, especially of the material kind, lack coherence and consistency and need further investigation for their verification eliminating every possibility of fraud and trickery, we have only two classes of men to deal with. One class is the prophets, Yoga saints and mystics, and the other class those Yogis and men, who as a result of autosuggestion or self-hypnosis develop conviction that they have attained a state of illumination and the visions and appearances they perceive in trance or semitrance states, are real manifestations of the Divine and not mere figments of their own voluntarily excited imaginations. These two classes have been mentioned to demonstrate the main compart-

ments into which Yogis and those who strive for God-realization can be roughly divided.

Dehydration and deprivation of water for some time in a desert, the rarity of air on a high mountain peak, prolonged starvation or numbness by exposure to extreme cold can cause hallucinations in which the victim ceases to experience the agony which torments him. From this analogy it is safe to infer that prolonged fasting, extreme austerity, and self-mortification as well as too little sleep, a state of excessive preoccupation with the supernatural and the numinous, in utter silence and solitude, cannot but predispose the mind toward obsessions and delusions that may even take the form of hallucinatory manifestations. The morbid effects of unnatural modes of life and repression of natural tendencies are now too well known to require mention. In the light of this knowledge it should not be difficult to understand the state of mind of an anchorite, whose life is a bundle of inhibitions, fastings, self-denials, and mortifications of the flesh with excessive attention given to the unseen and the unknowable. Is it then to be wondered that after a time the mind loses its grip on reality and lives in a world of fantasies and dreams?

It is a fact well known to hypnotists that, after a subject has been once subjected to a hypnotic trance, it becomes much easier on subsequent occasions to induce the sleep by means of a single gesture, a word of command, a look, or a suggestion. In rare cases, where the subject is responsive to telepathy, even a mental command from a distance is sometimes sufficient to bring about the hypnosis. This also holds true in the case of autohypnosis. Once a Sadhaka succeeds in inducing in himself the hypnotic trance, it becomes easier for him on subsequent attempts to induce this alluring state when the ideas present in his mind materialize in self-caused visions of extraordinary vividness, appearing much more real and substantial than the most vivid experiences in dreams. No wonder then that some of them exude an atmosphere of such poise and calm, and are so confident of the reality of their own visionary experiences that they often exercise a power-

ful effect on those who sit in their company contrasting their serene bearing with the agitated minds of other people.

Those of them who gain access to the deeper regions of the mind and succeed in developing dormant psychic faculties command even greater homage and excite greater wonder among the people who witness these extraordinary feats. Since most of us are not yet fully informed about the identity of the factors that work in a hypnotized subject and a self-hypnotizing Yogi causing the trance and the psychic phenomena, we fail to recognize the similarity between the two. Although this form of Yoga has its benefits it has its disadvantages as well. The initiate, it is true can voluntarily dive into the depths of his subconscious, but that only means descending into a dream-state, not as one does in sleep, but with deliberation plunging into a hallucinatory condition, transported to a world of being where thoughts take on a visionary aspect and fancies assume vivid appearances somewhat akin to the illusory states induced by drugs. At best it can only signify volitional excursions into the dream territory, often with some therapeutic results, but nothing more. There is at present general ignorance about the fact that the practice of Yoga, or that matter of any form of religious discipline, can lead to two fundamentally different mental states. One is brought about by autohypnosis, creating a hallucinatory inner world of visions, with or without psychic powers. The other is a state of transformed consciousness, leading to glorious supersensory planes of being attended always by genius and psychic powers in one form or another characteristic of all great seers, prophets, mystics, and Yogis of the past.

The following extract from Aldous Huxley's work, *Heaven and Hell*,\* can help to illustrate our meaning: "Some people never consciously discover their antipodes. Others make an occasional landing. Yet others (but they are few) find it easy to go and come as they please. For the naturalist of the mind, the collector of psychological specimens, the primary need is some safe, easy and

\*Harper & Row, New York, 1956.

reliable method of transporting himself and others from the old world to the new, from the continent of the familiar cows and horses to the continent of the wallaby and the platypus. . . . Two such methods exist. Neither of them is perfect; but both are sufficiently reliable, sufficiently easy and sufficiently safe to justify their employment by those who know what they are doing. In the first case, the soul is transported to its far-off destination by the aid of a chemical—either mescaline or lysergic acid. In the second case, the vehicle is psychological in nature, and the passage to the mind's antipodes is accomplished by hypnosis. The two vehicles carry the consciousness to the same region; but the drug has the longer range and takes its passengers further into the terra incognita." The passages denote a poor concept of the Ineffable or rather the very antithesis of the true mystical state. What Huxley is describing are visionary or rather hallucinatory excursions into below-the-surface levels of the mind while the unitive state is a flight to regions beyond the farthest reach of submerged states.

How and why hypnosis produces its observed effects Huxley, or for that matter psychologists, are not able to explain. "All that is necessary, in this context," Huxley says, "is to record the fact that some hypnotic subjects are transported, in the trance state, to a region in the mind's antipodes, where they find the equivalent of marsupials—strange psychological creatures leading an autonomous existence according to the law of their own being." \* About the physiological effect of mescaline, Huxley offers the explanation that probably it interferes with the enzyme system that regulates cerebral functioning and by so doing lowers the efficiency of the brain as an instrument for focusing the mind on the problems of life. "This lowering of the biological efficiency of the brain seems to permit," he says, "the entry into consciousness of certain classes of mental events, which are normally excluded, because they possess no survival value. Similar intrusions of biologically useless, but aesthetically and sometimes spiritually valuable, material may occur as the result of illness or fatigue; or they may be

\**Ibid.*

induced by fasting, or a period of confinement in a place of darkness and complete silence.” At another place he adds: “Milarepa in his Himalayan cavern, and the anchorites of the Thebaid followed essentially the same procedure and got essentially the same results. A thousand pictures of the Temptations of St. Anthony bear witness to the effectiveness of restricted diet and restricted environment. Asceticism, it is evident, has a double motivation. If men and women torment their bodies, it is not only because they hope in this way to atone for past sins and avoid future punishments, it is because they long to visit the mind’s antipodes and some visionary sightseeing. Empirically and from the reports of other ascetics, they know that fasting and a restricted environment will transport them where they long to go,”

These passages reveal an intellectual confusion, common among some scholars and people in general, about the sublime experience of the genuine mystical state. This confusion has prevailed from time immemorial, with the result that the rigid ascetic who starved himself or employed other methods of self-mortification to induce a hallucinatory state of mind, by causing alterations in the physiological balance of the body, has often been mistakenly bracketed with the true mystic or the illumined sage. In actual fact the two conditions are poles apart. One denotes a decline and the other a high degree of enhancement of the mental faculties. This is a point of paramount importance to be kept in mind in determining the value of Yoga or any other healthy form of spiritual discipline. The vision of God or contact with Cosmic Consciousness to be genuine must signify a step forward and not a recession the mental condition of the seeker. The reason for some taking hallucinatory drugs or employing other methods to gain visionary or illusory experiences springs from a misconception of the value of genuine mystical phenomena. If the urge to Divinity or have access to higher planes of being, which has been a powerful influence in the life of man from earliest times, has as its final aim the fantasmic states induced by hormone-derangement, starvation, or drugs, it clearly points to an unwholesome

impulse at work in the human psyche which, under the guise of leading man to his Maker, draws him into a world of appearances and apparitions, only slightly removed from the borderline of insanity.

Referring to the consciousness produced by intoxicants and anaesthetics, especially by alcohol, William James says\*: “The sway of alcohol over mankind is unquestionably due to its power to stimulate the mystical faculties of human nature, usually crushed to earth by the cold facts and dry criticisms of the sober hour. Sobriety diminishes, discriminates, and says no; drunkenness expands, unites and says yes. It is in fact the great exciter of the Yes function in man. It brings its votary from the chill periphery of things to the radiant core. It makes him for the moment one with truth. . . . The drunken Consciousness is one bit of the mystic Consciousness, and our total opinion of it must find its place in our opinion of that large whole.” . . . “Nitrous oxide and ether,” he continues, “especially nitrous oxide, when sufficiently diluted with water, stimulate the mystical consciousness in an extraordinary degree. Depth beyond depth of truth seems revealed to the inhaler. This truth fades out, however, or escapes, at the moment of coming to, and if any words remain over in which it seemed to clothe itself, they prove to be the veriest nonsense. Nevertheless, the sense of a profound meaning having been there persists, and I know more than one person who is persuaded that in the nitrous oxide trance we have a genuine metaphysical revelation.”

The confusion is due to the fact that a standard, clearcut picture of what a true mystic experiences in the highest flights of ecstasy is not available anywhere. In the first place the condition is incommunicable and, second, its range of expression is so vast and there are such enormously varied accounts of it that it is extremely difficult to locate the boundary at which the spurious forms, induced by hallucinogens, etc., cease and the genuine oc-

\**Varieties of Religious Experience* by William James, Longmans, Green, New York, 1903.

currences begin. This issue will find clarification in another chapter of this volume. In India the genuine Yogis with a transformed consciousness usually met instant recognition throughout the past. The learned scholar, the miracle-worker, and the one prone to drugs also had their place among the holy men, but they were in the lower ranks. The Hindu scriptures are categorical in their emphasis on a regulated life and a disciplined mind for one practicing Yoga. The extremes of the type that lead to morbid states of the mind or to foods and drinks that cause unhealthy reactions in the body have to be eschewed. In fact, some of the caste restrictions about food arise from the scriptural injunctions that food, being the builder of *prana*, must be pure and wholesome.

That the mental condition induced by nitrous oxide is hallucinatory is obvious from the fact, mentioned by William James, that on emerging from the visionary state the words in which the truth witnessed in the trance condition clothes itself are found to be sheer nonsense. The return to normalcy from all the hallucinogens and intoxicants that cause a temporary inflation of personality is almost always followed by feelings of depression or lassitude. The aftereffects of genuine ecstasy are altogether different. The genuinely ecstatic experience is revealed as if a heaven has been opened. The sublime nature of the vision, surpassing anything known or even imagined in the normal state, remains indelibly engraved on the memory, an unending source of inspiration and wonder which, even in the darkest hours of life, sustains the spirit with hope and cheer. Sometimes even one fleeting glimpse of the supreme state continues to shine in the depths of the heart as a beacon pointing to a glorious existence that does not belong to this daily world. St. Ignatius Loyola\* has described one such experience that befell him in these words (He refers to himself in the third person): "As he was going to pay his devotions at the Church of St. Paul, about a mile out of the town of Manresa, and was sitting on the banks of the Cardenero, or as

\* *Spiritual Exercises*, translated from the Spanish by Anthony Mottolo, Garden City, New York, 1964.

some say of the Rubricato, his mind was suddenly filled with a new and strange illumination, so that in one moment, and without any sensible image or appearance, certain things pertaining to mysteries of the Faith, together with other truths of natural science, were revealed to him, and this so abundantly and so clearly, that he himself said, that if all the spiritual light which his spirit had received from God up to the time when he was more than sixty-two years old, could be collected into one, it seemed to him that all this knowledge would not equal what was at that moment conveyed to his soul.”

The true prophets, mystics and Yoga saints constitute a class of men including in its ranks the founders of all religions, as well several great systems of metaphysics and philosophy, initiators of new lines of thought and conduct, adepts in the knowledge of the occult and originators or reformers of all systems of religious discipline and Yoga. Not one of them veiled his identity or hid himself and the Light he came to diffuse in a far-away mountain retreat, but, on the contrary, boldly fought the evils of his time and valiantly stood against the tyranny and wrath not only of reprobate kings and chiefs but also of powerful heads of corrupt religions and prevailing decadent creeds. These mystics proved an asset to the country in which they were born.

Misconceptions about this subject in the minds of the common people in this enlightened age are due to the fact that the modern world, though immensely rich in physical science, is deplorably lacking in knowledge of the occult and the sublime. The inherent tendency in the human mind to associate mystery and wonder with the Divine, for which there is a rational ground deprived of the proper nourishment, is driven to feed itself voraciously on a fictitious other-world, on the hair-raising tales of ghosts and haunted houses, on incredible stories of hypothetical miracle-working supermen and hierarchic Methuselahs living in inaccessible regions, which has done, and is doing, great harm by diverting the attention of the true seekers from the understanding of a mighty law of nature by which man can raise himself to a sub-

lime state in a most rational way as natural and as practical as the birth and development of a child. This unwholesome diet caused serious harm in several directions. On the one hand, it aggravates the mental condition and makes the appetite even more morbid and, on the other, draws the attention from the genuine ideals and diverts it toward persons or concepts of the occult and the Divine that are either fictitious and have no relation to reality or are not at all fit to form the models worthy of emulation by mankind.

Approached in a sane way the realm of the occult and supernatural will also be found to be crowded with the fictitious and the spurious, as in any worldly realm. Those who do so will find that, barring the experience of those prophets, mystics and Yoga sages, whose names are household words in the countries to which they belong, all the rest they have heard about such as the imaginary adepts and wonder-workers do not possess the seal of attestation either of those who were a witness to their extraordinary lives, or of the monuments they left behind to show that they were men or women of flesh and blood. The utmost they will discover of the occult, in the objective world, well attested and confirmed, will be the erratic and unpredictable phenomena produced by sensitives, mediums, hypnotized subjects, or some self-hypnotizing Yogis, but beyond that, nothing. If they try to bring before their minds the image of the most outstanding seer or Yogi they have ever heard of, out of the known and well-attested cases, they will find that he is something quite different from what they themselves would wish to be. They will also find that almost all the illuminati, about whom they have heard, had lives of suffering, of intense longing for the Divine, sometimes almost to the point of madness, of utter simplicity and self-denial, of detachment from the world and renunciation of its pleasures, of selfless service, often in the face of colossal odds and insurmountable difficulties, of complete immersion in the love of the Deity and entire absorption in the inner universe. They can easily gather from this that success in the quest, if ever attained, would add

their names to the same category, and fill their minds with the same fires of passion, renunciation, love of the Divine, and service for humanity that characterized the illuminati.

It is well known that in both medieval and ancient times the men and women, who delved into the occult in order to become sorcerers, magicians, necromancers, wizards, or witches were never publicly applauded. They were forced to practice in secret, to form esoteric circles and brotherhoods, and to perform their weird rites far from the eyes of common men, in eerie spots and in the shades of night. Modern man, deceived by the fictitious accounts he has read, and filled with the glamorous images of hypothetical Master Yogis, is too often led to believe that a few years practice with certain secret methods would raise him to the same level, able to achieve impossible deeds with the power gained over the forces of nature, to conquer disease, to win domination over men, to know the deeper secrets of life, and to live in utter peace and bliss under all circumstances. How many men succeed in achieving these objectives can be gauged from the fact that in recent years out of the millions, who undertook the practice of Yoga, not one has claimed that he has gained even a fraction of the powers claimed for it or for other forms of esoteric discipline by the over-enthusiastic protagonists of these systems. Leaving miraculous powers aside, how many have plainly or implicitly made the assertion that they, in their person, have attained the transcendent state of Consciousness claimed for Yoga, and backed their assertions by a frank self-revelation in the same way as has been done by several well-known Christian mystics, Sufis, and Yoga saints in the past with a candour and sincerity that has made their works Immortal? If there is none or only one or two, it clearly points to the fact that the present way of approach to Yoga holds little promise of success for the legions who undertake it in these days.

By miraculous powers we mean the type of supernatural talents which legendary Yogis like Gorajah Nath are said to have exercised, that is, the type of powers mentioned by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras under the term *siddhis* and which are repeated in al-

most all the books on Kundalini- and Hatha-Yoga. This does not refer to uncontrollable psychic gifts, which hundreds of mediums possess, but to the power of will developed to an extent where one can exercise the occult faculties, under all circumstances and in full view of people in broad day light, and can repeat the same performance at any time at his choice. The interruption of breathing, of the heart action, or of other functions of the body, including the flow of blood, are merely physical phenomena and do not fall in the category of occult powers, referred to here. Many of the present-day concepts about the supernatural and the occult are purely mythical. But the myth is so prevalent and so concordant with our wishful thinking that, despite every indication to the contrary and the fact that hundreds of thousands of disillusioned seekers bear testimony to the repeatedly proven hollowness of many of these beliefs, a large number of those interested in the occult still persist in the quest. They convince themselves that had such extraordinary achievements not been possible, then countless men would not have devoted their lives to this pursuit from time immemorial. Others console themselves with the thought that were there not a substratum of truth in such episodes all these stories of supermen could not have found currency or commanded such wide acceptance.

As has been explained, the Yogi whose image has been projected on the public mind, especially in the West, by some modern exponents of the occult, exists nowhere in the world. There is no Yogi who readily changes from the physical into the astral body, conveys his instructions by mental projection, heals with a touch, transmutes base metals into gold, transforms his disciples into adepts, or performs other similar miracles while leading a happy unruffled life free from the cares of the world. At least history makes no mention of any such extraordinary spiritual prodigy or Yogi who in his own person rose above physical laws, performed miracles left and right, and lived a life of peace and happiness to the end. On the other hand, in all saints and mystics of the world we come across lives of spiritual storm and stress, of a raging

passion for divine experience, of periods of intense joy interspersed with spells of extreme despair, of persecutions and martyrdom, of extreme poverty and want, of ravaging disease and premature deaths, or rigid austerities and self-mortification, of ridicule and calumny, of great trials and suffering and other vicissitudes, in many cases far more severe and trying than are often met with in ordinary lives.

Time and again the author of the Bhagavad-Gita gives an insight into the mental condition of the accomplished Yogi. The Herculean struggle for self-mastery, the extremely recalcitrant nature of the mind, the moderate, well-balanced life that must be led, the awful yet blissful nature of the supreme vision, the pitfalls in the path, the pattern of behaviour to be followed, the mental attributes of the emancipated, the dangers of employing psychic powers, the sacrifices and surrenders to be made are all described at length. There are many people who after years of ceaseless efforts, sacrifice, and suffering find no change in their state of consciousness, and in the essential aspects of their personality continue to be the same as they were before. In their despair they either blame the teacher or the whole system which they followed or even question the justice of the divine Being toward whom all their devotion, sacrifice, and effort were directed. Why there should be such a reaction is based on the mistaken idea that all our spiritual endeavour is a means to please or propitiate the Lord and to seek His grace in order to cross over to the other shore. Is it not an anomaly that while, in the intellectual sphere, out of millions who devote their lives to the various sciences and arts and make colossal sacrifices to win distinction in them, only an extremely few rise to the stature of a Shakespeare, a Kalidasa, an Omar Khayyam or a Confucius. The rest reasonably attribute the rise to exceptional natural talent, based on some still unknown biological law. In the spiritual realm the seekers after God do not often take the same reasonable view and, instead of attributing their failure to a law of nature, assign other causes for it.

The true aim of Yoga is transformation of Consciousness, the

creation of a heaven on earth. What lasting joy can supernormal talents or command over supernatural forces bring to a man whose inner being has not risen above the narrow, vacillating periphery of the human mind. What greater happiness can occult gifts, temporal power, or earthly riches confer on a man who, in perennial communion with the Universal Ocean of Life, has realized his own immortal nature, knows himself as one with the Eternal Fount of Cosmic Consciousness, in want of nothing and beyond the farthest reach of the contaminations of the earth: sorrow, decay and death. The other subsidiary achievements, supernormal gifts and powers of domination, after which many people strive, are but alluring pitfalls in the path. The object to be realized is the experience of the Self, beyond all price, beyond all thought and beyond everything the earth can offer. This is how Chandogya Upanishad (iii—14-2 & 3) has tried to depict this state:—"He, who is permeating the mind, who has Prana for his body, whose nature is consciousness . . . who possesses all the agreeable odours and all the pleasant tastes, who exists pervading all this, who is without speech (and other senses). . . . This my Atman residing in (the lotus of) the heart is greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds."

This idea is re-echoed by Lao Tze in his Tao-Te-Ching (85 and 89): "Of old these came to be in possession of the One; Heaven in virtue of the One is limpid; Earth in virtue of the One is settled; Gods in virtue of the One have their potencies; the valley in virtue of the One is full; the Myriad creatures in virtue of the One are alive; lords and princes in virtue of the One become leaders in the empire; it is the One that makes these what they are; . . . The Myriad creatures in the world are born from something, and Something from Nothing." The supreme experience of Yoga or other forms of religious discipline is unlike any other experience known to the mind. It is more real and more convincing, whether undergone in the trance state or in full wakefulness, than any objective experience undergone by anyone during the whole course of embodied life.

# 5

## The Discipline of Yoga

As the various methods for the awakening of *kundalini*, described in Hatha-Yoga manuals or prescribed in other ancient texts, are already mentioned in detail in several modern books, it is not necessary here to enter into a recapitulation of the techniques already explained in other writings. A few words are, however, necessary to bring out the fact that all the practices and exercises described are of a type that one would expect of a system, designed for the excitation of a psychosomatic mechanism in the body, intimately connected with the reproductive region at the base of the spine and the cerebral hemispheres in the head. The ancient writers on the subject have made no secret of this close relationship between the two poles of the mechanism, and even the purest and the most saintly of them have described the interaction of the two in plain terms without any effort at ambiguity. In assessing the value of the ancient techniques it is necessary to bear in mind that they were designed at a time when knowledge of the human body was extremely meagre and recourse to supernatural agencies and spiritual forces to account for the more obscure functions of the organism which are not clearly defined in biological terms was very common. When once the processes responsible for Spiritual experience are rightly understood in the context of

biology, the development of new techniques and more improved methods will follow instantly as a matter of course.

Patanjali divides the whole process of Yoga into eight parts, or limbs. These are *yama* (restraint), *niyama* (discipline), *asana* (posture), *prana-yama* (control of breathing), *pratyahara* (control of senses), *dharana* (concentration), *dhyana* (unbroken contemplation), and *samadhi* (complete absorption). The Hatha-Yoga and Laya-Yoga have also the same eight divisions. There are minor differences in respect of the subdivisions of each part. The Yoga-Sutras specify five *yamas* and five *niyamas*, and the manuals of Hatha-Yoga ten of each. Briefly stated the *yamas* are avoidance of violence to living creatures, truth, absence of covetousness, forbearance, fortitude, kindness, simplicity, moderation in food, and purity of body and of mind. The *niyamas* are austerity, contentment, belief in scriptures, charity, worship, listening to holy texts, repugnance for wrongful action, adherence to scriptural ordinances, recitation of sacred formulas, and practice of religious observances.

Broadly speaking the ordinances grouped under the heads of *yama* and *niyama* are the rules of conduct and behaviour to be observed by every aspirant to spiritual illumination. They are designed to inculcate the ideals of truth, piety, harmlessness, charity, self-control, and altruism without which no spiritual achievement is possible. In the Bhagavad-Gita the qualifications of one fit for the supreme experience have been repeatedly and variously defined.

There is no doubt that the most important contribution of religion to the progress of mankind has been morality. From the earliest times the ideas of forbidden and permissible, of sacred and profane, of clean and polluted, of pure and impure formed the raw material from which the subsequent towering edifices of morality and ethics were built. Both in primitive societies and in later civilized cultures the evolutionary impulse was at the bottom of the ethical tendency in the primary crude and subsequent elaborated forms.

If it is conceded that man has a spiritual goal to attain, and there is certainly no conflict of opinion about this point, at least among the various faiths of mankind, it follows that, in order to make this idea a reality, the spirit must gain more and more domination over the flesh and not be dominated by it, since that would be a step in the opposite direction toward carnality and bondage and not toward emancipation. This implies that rise in morality denotes a rise in the power of the spirit. From this the conclusion is obvious that any discipline or method designed to gain self-realization or God-consciousness must be oriented to raise the moral stature of the practitioner to a level where it can offer no hindrance in gaining self-mastery to the enlightened soul.

For this reason self-denial, control of the senses, detachment from the world, truth and right conduct form the necessary ingredients of every kind of Yoga and every school of religious discipline. As it is in the nature of men to go to the extreme, the scriptural injunctions and the spirit of the commandments have too often been distorted or highly exaggerated with the result that excessive forms of self-denial and detachment, instead of a healthy and judicious moderation, have been and are frequently practiced to forge even stronger bonds around the soul by causing obsessive and morbid states of the mind. The vast majority of the seers of the Upanishads were householders and lived healthy and meritorious normal lives to a mature age, when they entered the third stage and retired to the forests to strive for enlightenment. The successful termination of this effort led later to the fourth stage, or *ashrama*, when the now accomplished sage wandered as a homeless ascetic, welcomed and revered everywhere, to allay the doubts and answer the questions of those deeply interested in the mighty problems of life and death. One of the greatest of these sages, Yajnavalkya, discredits severe austerity and self-mortification as effective means for Brahman-realization. In the Mundaka Upanishad continence, truth, and performance of prescribed duties are considered to be sufficient measures for the attainment of higher consciousness. The Bhagavad-Gita strongly condemns ex-

cessive penance and self-mortification, preaching moderation, selfless action, devotion, truth, and righteousness as the most appropriate virtues of those who seek enlightenment.

Considering the arduous nature of the psycho-physiological discipline, and the long duration of mental exercises, it is but natural that certain postures of the body should have been chosen for the *asana* stage. Beyond this, *asanas* have no other significance in other forms of Yoga and, according to both Patanjali and the Gita, the Sadhaka himself has to make the choice of the way in which to seat himself, remaining steady and keeping the head, torso, and neck erect to avoid flexion of the spinal cord. In the Hatha-Yoga, however, in order to prepare the body for a sudden infusion of the life force as the result of a powerful awakening of the serpent power, *asanas* are also used to limber one up to a state of toughness and flexibility necessary for the proper functioning of the visceral organs. The statement in the Gheranda Samhita that there are 8,400,000 *asanas*, of which 1,600 are said to be excellent, is obviously an exaggeration, a specimen of the manner in which a simple fact is presented in an entirely incredible manner in some of the ancient texts, demanding a sane and critical approach on the part of the seeker. The number of *asanas* actually described in this work is only thirty-two. Hatha-Yoga Pradipaka describes fifteen *asanas* only.

Shiva Samhita mentions eighty-four postures and this number is usually accepted even now. There are Sadhus in India who can perform most of these *asanas* with alacrity for a small gift. They are as far away from Yoga as any body-training gymnast or acrobat is. It is as great a misnomer to call efficiency in the mere performance of a few difficult and striking *asanas* Yoga as it would be to designate a dextrous circus performer as a Yogi. The Yogic *asanas*, when employed merely for gaining suppleness and health of the body, are no better than other body-building exercise and ought to be understood and labelled as such. The assertions made in Hatha-Yoga treatises that miraculous powers attend the proper performance of certain *asanas* are an obvious exaggeration,

used as an inducement to the seekers for undertaking the disciplines. The two most convenient *asanas* for any kind of Yoga are the *padmasana* and the *siddhasana*. In the former the right foot is placed on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh, with the heels pressing against the pudenda, and the hands either placed in a similar manner, the right hand on the left thigh and vice versa, or simply each hand on the thigh of the same side. In the other *asana* one heel is pressed against the perineum and the other against the region of the genitals, with the hands on the thighs or one upon the other, palms upward, on the upper leg.

Every Sadhaka can select a convenient posture for himself out of the many enumerated in Yoga manuals, but for an earnest seeker, whose mind is set on *samadhi*, the posture should be one which he can maintain for hours without fatigue or cramp, and which keeps his head and trunk steady and unflexed. A few words are here necessary to explain the significance of the gruesome *asanas* peculiar to some schools of Tantric Yoga, in which the Sadhaka performs the practice in a cremation ground or seated on a skull or astride a corpse. The use of human skulls and bones in the performance of occult practices has been in vogue from very early times and prevailed in many places in one form or the other. In the mystery cults of Chaldea, Greece, and Egypt, revolting and fear-exciting ceremonies, as for instance the kissing of snakes, embracing a dead person's hand, infliction of wounds, and the shedding of blood, were held to instill a sense of respect and awe with regard to the mysterious ritual into which the candidate was initiated. In the light of these practices there is nothing new or surprising in the *mundasana* and *shavasana* of some Tantrics and the utter indifference to what they eat, not excluding even dung, of the Aghoris.

The six processes of body-cleaning are: (1) *Dhauti*. This is a method to clean the mouth, throat, stomach, and intestines by swallowing a long piece of wet cloth and then drawing it out. The other accessories to this process are drinking a copious draught of water and then expelling it through the mouth, con-

traction and expansion of the abdominal and intestinal muscles to eject wind, self-stimulated vomiting and muscular contractions, combined with pressure of the breath, to cause increase or decrease in the peristaltic movement of the entire digestive tract at will. (2) *Vasti*. This is a method by which a Yogi, sitting in a stream or pool up to the navel, can draw up water through the anus by means of suction applied with the action of breath and the intestinal muscles combined, and after cleaning the lower portion of the tract, eject it. (3) *Neti*. This means thorough cleansing of the nasal passages by the use of a thread. (4) *Lauliki*. This is achieved by the movement of the contracted abdominal muscles from side to side to ensure regular motion of the bowels and to maintain the suppleness of the waist. (5) *Trataka*. This is an exercise at concentration and strengthening the muscles of the eye by gazing fixedly at some object without winking. (6) *Kapalabhati*. This is a method for the removal of phlegm and mucus by means of breathing exercises or by drawing up water through the nose and ejecting it through the mouth and vice versa.

It is obvious that years of practice are required in order to gain proficiency in these exercises. What purpose could this difficult and even precarious system of body-cleansing fulfill in the attainment of a higher state of consciousness, is a question that can arise in the mind of any student of Hatha-Yoga. To take only one instance, the exercise of *trataka* in the hands of an ignorant Sadhaka can do great damage to the eyes. Sometimes this practice degenerates into gazing at the sun with disastrous results and loss of eyesight of the unfortunate seekers after Yoga. What unbending necessity could drive the experts to devise and practice such rough methods of internal cleanliness, especially of the stomach and the intestinal tract? As far as we know the only reason offered for these practices is that they are needed to correct the inequality of the three humours and to keep the body in a healthy condition. But why such drastic methods were undertaken when drugs to cause vomiting and even contrivances to clean the colon were available in India in ancient times is not clear. There can be only

two answers to the question: either these practices were undertaken for their wonder-exciting property, which appears hardly plausible as more amazing performances, such as sleeping on a bed of nails or standing on one leg or living atop a tree, were possible with less labour and the chances of a greater yield, or there is something inherent in this form of Yoga which makes proficiency in the methods of body-cleansing a necessary qualification in a candidate for sublime spirituality, and for this reason years were spent in gaining mastery over them.

According to the ancient treatises on Hatha-Yoga the Sadhaka sets before himself the goal of conquering disease and decay, and, with this aim in view, undertakes the arduous task of *kaya sadhana*, or the Culture of the Body, to make it invulnerable to death by gaining control not only over respiration, circulation of blood, digestion, and elimination with *pranayama* and *shatkarma*, but - also over the autonomic nervous system and the brain in order to gain immortal life with a *siddha deha* or Perfect Body. The idea of prolonging the life of the body for indefinite periods was also prevalent among the Taoist sects of China, Tibetan Tantrics, and alchemists of ancient times. There is no doubt that, when benignly disposed in a healthy body, the awakening of *kundalini* can lead to rejuvenation, prolongation of life, and immunity to disease commensurate with the possibilities latent in the human constitution. This might have happened in exceptional cases in the past. But lack of sufficient data about this mighty mechanism, designed by nature for injecting a new life into the human body, not only makes the enterprise directed to activate it highly dangerous at this stage of our knowledge, but also stands in the way of deriving all possible benefit from its activity when it is aroused. Because of the extremely uncertain nature of the experiment, it has been said about this Yoga that the Sadhaka holds immortality in one hand and death in the other. The lure of unfading youth, victory over death, miraculous powers, and the capacity of enjoyment of the pleasures on earth for cyclic periods of time has been, perhaps, one of the most

powerful factors in antiquity in attracting neophytes to the arduous enterprise of Hatha-Yoga. There are countless people even now, including men of learning, who have an inborn faith that such a possibility does exist in the occult systems of a religious discipline such as Yoga, not knowing, sometimes, that this faith springs from the promises that lie concealed in the natural Fountain of the Elixir of Life, *kundalini*.

Because of their stringent nature some of the practices of Hatha-Yoga have been kept secret and never divulged except to the initiates who, in the eyes of the preceptor, possessed the physical fitness and the presence of mind necessary to emerge from the ordeal safe and sound. Even with such rigorous training and strict body control only very few of the Sadhakas could stand the ordeal without succumbing to the severity of the trial. From this it is easy to gauge the magnitude of the risk involved for an ordinary individual in modern complex society, especially for one who has no practice in, nor even the possibility of gaining such complete control over the body as is envisaged in, the difficult *shatkarma* exercises. Even fearless anchorites, divested of all worldly responsibility and trained to perfection, often gave way before the rigour of the ordeal. The implication of this well-known aspect of Kundalini-Yoga, which is of paramount importance in understanding the biological basis of this cult, is often overlooked. The point that should have excited curiosity is that if there is a risk in the enterprise (and a whole system of body-control exercises has been devised to minimize that risk by manipulation of the visceral organs), it clearly indicates that the practice creates a disturbance in the body for which a certain state of preparedness and control over the vital organs is necessary. It is a matter of regret that because of the cloud of mistrust and suspicion under which this system has been labouring in the past, it has received less attention from the learned than it deserved. It is easy to understand that the risk mentioned and the disturbance guarded against, whether psychical or physical, could not be due to causes that have no material basis, because if such

were the case the necessity for purely physical measures to combat the danger would not arise.

It is therefore obvious that the danger apprehended and the disturbances feared must be of a physical nature. The danger is particularly related to *pranayama*. In Hatha-Yoga practices, *pranayama* is the lever by which the serpent power is awakened. "Performed in the prescribed manner," says Hatha-Yoga Pradipika (2.41), "*pranayama* purifies the nerve-circuit enabling *prana* in good form to pierce (the mouth of) *susumna* and to enter through it." With the entry of *prana* in the central canal (*susumna*) the startling manifestations peculiar to Hatha-Yoga, but possible in other forms of Yoga also, begin to make their appearance in the body of the Sadhaka. The arduous types of *pranayama*, recommended in the books on Hatha-Yoga, are always attended by a certain amount of risk. There is not only a possibility of damage to the lung tissue, caused by overstrain, leading to disease, but danger to the safety of the nervous system as well. It is for this reason that special stress is laid in Hatha-Yoga manuals on beginning the exercises with restraint under the instructions of a competent Guru along with close adherence to a strict regimen in food and drink.

In his exposition Vacaspati Misra refers to *manu* (vi. 72), in which he says, "By restraints of breath one should burn up defects." In the Yoga-Sara-Sangraha (second part), it is said on the authority of Yoga-Vasistha that one who becomes proficient in performing *kumbhaka* (the retentive phase of *pranayama*) without resorting to the other two, that is the inhalation and the exhalation phases, can achieve anything he desires in the three worlds. The importance of *pranayama* as a means of achieving fixity of attention is admitted by Patanjali in i. 34 and ii. 53 of his Yoga-Sutras.

In the Hatha-Yoga system, however, combined with the *bandhas* and *mudras*, *pranayama* takes a more drastic and, at the same time, a more unnatural and precarious form. Its effect on the body of the Sadhaka, especially one not favoured with a hardy and

robust constitution, being often fraught with danger, particularly in the initial stages, the practice of *shatkarma* seems to have introduced to give a tone to the system and to offset the injurious effects resulting from the overstrain and the disorganization caused in the body by the drastic exercise. "Proficiency in *shatkarma* before beginning the practice of *pranayama*," says Hatha-Yoga Pradipika, "is necessary for one who has excess of phlegm in him. But for one who is free from these defects (has a harmonious state of the humours) *shatkarma* is not necessary." Since the standard of health demanded by a rigorous training of kind is uncommon, recourse to *shatkarma* is almost always by those who devote themselves to Hatha-Yoga. The control over the visceral organs gained by it can always be used with advantage to combat disturbances in which the whole body, including the brain and the digestive system, is involved. Support for this view is again furnished by the unambiguous statements made in the Tantras that particular difficulty is experienced when *kundalini* pierces the three *granthis*, or knots, located at the *muladhara*, *anahata*, and *ajna cakras*, especially the second one, commanding the heart and navel centres which, it is said, can cause great disorder and even disease.

If we now turn to the science of therapeutics for guidance in this matter we will find that the need to irrigate the large intestine or to empty the stomach arises in acute digestive disturbances, and the washing of the colon is sometimes resorted to in delirious conditions of the brain, caused by toxæmia arising from a poisoned condition of the blood. This is exactly why these methods of purification of the internal organs were practiced the ancient students of this Yoga, no doubt, after long experience and study of the symptoms caused by a sudden awakening of the serpent power. This means that, if the practices group under *shatkarma* are to be taken as an indication of the reactions caused in the body by *pranayama* or the arousal of *kundalini* they provide strong evidence for the assumption that the exercises of Hatha-Yoga can lead to a sudden change in the organic

balance of the body of a type that can precipitate serious disturbances (of both a psychological and a physical nature), and it is necessary to fight with extraordinary presence of mind and control over the digestive and other organs. With the enormous advances made in the knowledge of medicine and surgery, most of the purposes served by these practices can now be achieved by mechanical devices: stomach pump, enema, etc., but they fail in one essential aspect, that is, the confidence and the will power gained by the practitioner in the process of winning mastery over his body by these methods.

It is known that the most critical period, when the constant presence and guidance of the Guru is considered indispensable, is the time of awakening. The Guru continues to supervise the operation closely till the *ajna cakra* is reached. After this stage the Sadhaka watches closely until the *ajna cakra* is reached. The Sadhaka then enters the hierarchy of the accomplished ones, and their relations as preceptor and disciple cease. Sometimes the Guru even bows to the disciple at this point, in recognition of the surpassing achievement. This ceremony of bowing to the disciple at the end of the initiation ceremony of a neophyte, admitted to the order, is even now performed by some ascetic sects in India in imitation of the ancient custom. The Guru/disciple relationship ends at the sixth centre, or the Cakra of Command, as the Yogi is now guided by intuition and has access to a Fount of Knowledge higher than that of any mortal Guru. The hazardous nature of the enterprise and the colossal nature of the task that made the constant guidance of a preceptor necessary have been often conveyed by the Yoga adepts of India in cryptic expressions like “diving deep in the ocean without getting wet” or “making the frog dance before the serpent” or, as Lalla has said, “submitting to thunder and lightening” or “being ground to powder in a mill.”

*Pranayama* is of several kinds. In the Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali and in the Hatha-Yoga treatises three phases of the process are recognized. First is *puraka*, that is, inhalation which is done by

closing either the right or the left nostril with the thumb and forefinger of one hand applied to the place. Then comes *kumbhaka*, or the retentive phase, when the inhaled air is retained inside for a certain duration of time. This is followed by *recaka*, or the exhalation of the breath through the other nostril. This makes one *pranayama*. The process is repeated either by inhaling again from the same nostril from which the breath has been expelled or from the one through which it was first inhaled. The duration of each phase is regulated either by repeating mentally the mystic syllable *Om* or any other Mantra, or by keeping count of time with the fingers of the other hand. The three phases are of the same or different durations. *Kumbhaka* may be done for a period twice or four times that of the *puraka*, and *recaka* twice or of the same duration as *puraka*. One form of *pranayama* is done by retaining the breath outside after it is expelled for a certain duration before another inhalation is done.

About the various methods of *pranayama*, as prescribed by different exponents, enough has been said to show that the ultimate objective is to reduce the rhythm of breathing to such an extent that it becomes hardly perceptible or, in the words of Vacaspati Misra, a bit of cotton held before the nostrils should remain unmoved in the flow of the breath. In the Yoga-Sara-Sangraha (second part) the place of precedence is allotted to *kumbhaka*, which can continue for months and years without *puraka* and *recaka*. This is designated as *kevala kumbhaka*, and is known as the fourth *pranayama*, beyond count, time, and space. *Kevala kumbhaka* also finds mention in Yoga-ttatra Upanishad. With the attainment of proficiency in this *pranayama* the power to travel in space and other *siddhis*, it is said, come into the possession of the Sadhaka. Clearly, therefore, the aim of the practice is to diminish breathing to a degree that it appears that one is not breathing at all or, in other words, is apparently in a perennial *kumbhaka*, that is, in a state of suspended breathing. Whether the duration of *puraka*, *kumbhaka* and *recaka* are uniform or they are made to vary in a certain proportion, the effort

of the Sadhaka is to be directed toward increasing the interval by slow degrees till an extremely reduced rhythm, working effortlessly, is attained.

The following observation of Mircea Eliade in his book, *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom*, dwelling on some of the effects caused by *pranayama*, is deserving of attention: "The Indian ascetics recognize four modalities of consciousness (in addition to the enstatic "state"): diurnal consciousness, consciousness in sleep with dreams, consciousness in sleep without dreams and 'Cataleptic consciousness.' By means of Pranayama, that is by increasingly prolonging inhalation and exhalation (the goal of the practice being to allow as long an interval as possible to pass between the two moments of respiration)—the Yogi can, then, penetrate all the modalities of consciousness. For the non-initiate there is discontinuity between these several modalities; thus he passes from the state of waking to the state of sleep unconsciously. The Yogi must preserve continuity of consciousness—that is he must penetrate each of these states with determination and lucidity."

By the term "cataleptic consciousness," Eliade refers to *turiya*, or the fourth state of consciousness, the other three being the states of wakefulness, dream, and dreamless sleep. According to the Indian scriptures, *turiya* is the state of self-knowledge or illumination in which the identity of the *Atman* and *Brahman* or *Jiva* or *Iswara* is realized. It is the indescribable state of existence experienced in the highest form of *samadhi* or the ecstatic "State," as Eliade calls it. The confusion seems to arise from the fact that he distinguishes between *samadhi* and *turiya* while, in actual fact, *turiya* is the modality of consciousness present in *asamprajnata*, *nirvikalpa*, or *nirbija samadhi*, and also characterizes the consciousness of a Jivan-Mukta, or one liberated in life. This is clear on the authority of Mandukya Upanishad (7) wherein it is said: "They consider the Fourth (that is *turiya*) to be that which is not conscious of the internal world nor conscious of the external world. . . . That is the Self and that is to be known." Again (in 12) it says: "The partless *Om* is the Fourth

(*caturthah*, i.e., *turiya*)—*beyond* all conventional dealings, the limit of the negation of the phenomenal world, the auspicious and the non-dual. *Om* is thus the Self to be sure. He who knows thus enters the Self through the Self.” The position has been clarified beyond doubt by Gaudapada in his *Karika* (i.14 and 15). “The earlier two (*visva* and *taijasa*) are endowed with dream and sleep, but *prajna* is endowed with dreamless sleep. People of firm conviction do not see either sleep or dream in *turiya*. . . . Dream belongs to one who sees falsely, and sleep to one who does not know Reality. When the two errors of these two are removed, one attains the state that is *turiya*.”

The point here is whether these four modalities of consciousness are characteristic of the embodied spirit or whether they have an independent existence of their own. The first three, it is hardly necessary to argue, have no independent existence, that is, they do not exist as cosmic planes of wakefulness, dreaming, and dreamless sleep, but represent different states of human consciousness. They are mutually exclusive, that is, as argued by Gaudapada, when one is dreaming he cannot be awake and when in dreamless slumber he can neither dream nor be awake. Similarly when one is awake he cannot dream, in the real sense of the term, nor can he be in dreamless slumber. It is, therefore, obvious that the moment a Yogi enters the dream state with lucidity, that is consciousness, dreaming must cease forthwith and when one enters the state of dreamless slumber it too must vanish instantly, for the simple reason that as darkness and light cannot exist together, in the same way the oblivion of the dream state and dreamless slumber cannot coexist with lucidity for any length of time. It might be contended that the so-called ecstatic “state” (*samadhi*), being a transhuman plane of consciousness, can “penetrate” the other three. In reply to this it is enough to point out that at the very moment when transhuman consciousness penetrates any modality of human consciousness it must at once transform and illumine it. It can neither assume the modality into which it enters nor coexist with it.

The point has been discussed at some length to show what grave misconceptions exist in respect of *samadhi* and the transcendent states of consciousness even among eminent scholars both in India and in other places. From this it is easy to infer the amount of error in the minds of the common people about these fascinating but still very little understood mental states. The terminology used by the ancient writers is sometimes so technical and difficult and the expositions are so varied that for those who have not had the experience it is extremely difficult to make even a remote mental picture of it. The conflicts and contradictions that occur as a result of this difficulty are, therefore, only natural. The experience of *samadhi* is not an artificial or extraneous mental condition, brought about by the suppression of thought, nor a magical state of perception that can “penetrate” into the dreamless and dream levels of the mind while retaining an awareness of the process, so that one continues to remain conscious that he is dreaming or in dreamless sleep all through the paradoxical episode. But it denotes a transformation of the whole personality—dream state, dreamless slumber, waking and all—a marvellous rise to higher planes of consciousness, the emergence of an effulgent, sublime inner being (called *divya deha*, or divine body, by the ancients) which persists through all the three states of waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep in the same way as the normal personality of an individual persists through them.

*Pratyahara* is defined by Patanjali (11. 54) as the withdrawal of senses from their objects in conformity with the restrictions imposed by the mind. In his commentary on this Sutra, Vyasa explains *pratyahara* in this way: “When there is no conjunction with their own objects, the organs in imitation of the mind-stuff, as it is in itself, become, as it were, restricted. When the mind-stuff is restricted, like the mind-stuff they become restricted; and do not, like the subjugation of the senses, require any further aid. Just as when the Queen-bee flies up, the bees fly up after her, and when she settles down, they settle down after her. So when the mind-stuff is restricted, the organs are restricted. Thus

there is the withdrawal of the senses.” Yoga-Sara-Sangraha, the authority of Narada Purana, defines *pratyahara* as the withdrawal of senses from all the objects in which they are engrossed. “The Yoga practitioner,” it says, “who applies himself to meditation (*dhyana*) without first subduing his senses can only be considered as unintelligent, as the meditation of such a person can never bear fruit.” Gheranda Samhita (iv. 3. 4. 5) defines *hara* as the withdrawal of mind from honour and opprobrium from what is good to hear and what is not good to hear, what is odorous and malodorous, from sweet, sour and bitter, from any form of sound, smell or taste by which the mind is drawn to bring it back under the control of the Self (*Atman*). The Bhagavad-Gita (ii. 57. 58) describes the state of one observing *pratyahara* in these words: “Stable is the mind of him who, unattached to everything, meets good and evil without rejoicing at the one and feeling revulsion at the other. . . . When a man like a tortoise, which draws in its limbs from all directions, withdraws his senses from the objects of desire then he attains to a stable state of mind.”

“The first five limbs of Yoga, from *yama* to *pratyahara*,” says Yoga-Sara-Sangraha, “are for the control of the body, *prana* the senses and the other three limbs, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* for the control of *citta* (consciousness).” Divested of mystical and magical colouring with which some writers on Yoga try to invest these practices, *dharana* is simple concentration on certain susceptible regions of the body or on some object, with a mental content relating to some aspect of Divinity, to the supernatural or the numinous. *Dhyana* is deeper concentration persisting for a longer time and *samadhi* is the absorption of the mercurial mind in the contemplation of the Self. According to Patanjali (1.2.3.4) “When the mind-stuff is restricted then the Seer (that is, the Self) abides in himself. At other times It (the Self) takes the same form as the fluctuations (of the mind-stuff).” A man deeply engrossed in study or in painting or in other absorbing occupation is in a state of concentration. A classi-

cal example of absorbed concentration, cited in Yoga-Sara-Sangraha, refers to the mental condition of an arrow-maker who is so engrossed in his work that he fails to see the king passing by.

“Binding the mind-stuff to a place is fixed attention (*dharana*)” says Patanjali in the Yoga-Sutras (3.1). Commenting on it, Vyasa says: “Binding of the mind-stuff, only in so far as it is a fluctuation, to the navel or to the heart lotus or to the light within the head or to the tip of the nose or to the tip of the tongue or to other places of the same kind or to an external object—this is fixed attention.” *Dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* are, in actual fact, the three successive phases of one single effort directed toward making the attention one-pointed. When *dharana* becomes continuous it is *dhyana*. Vacaspati Misra in his exposition of Sutra 3.2 of the Yoga-Sutras, cites a passage from Vishnu Purana in which *dhyana* is explained in these words: “An uninterrupted succession of presented ideas single-in-intent upon His (the Deity’s) form without desire for anything else, that, O King, is contemplation (*dhyana*).” In other words *dhyana* is the continuous flow of thought on one single object to the exclusion of all other thoughts. According to the Sarva-Sarsana-Sangraha, “the continual flow of thought in one place, resting on the object to be contemplated, and avoiding all incongruous thought” is *dhyana*. The same view is expressed in Isvar-Gita quoted in Yoga-Sara-Sangraha.

Studied from a rational angle, the practice of *dharana* and *dhyana*, as expounded in the Yoga-Sutras and other ancient books has nothing “mysterious” or “magical” or “mystical” about them. *Dhyana*, deep meditation, connotes fixity of attention on one object and this connotation has come unaltered from the Vedic period in India. It is, of course, the intensity with which concentration of mind is practiced and the will and perseverance behind the practice which are decisive in achieving success in the enterprise. The various exercises of Yoga including *asana*, *pranayama*, and *Pratyahara* lend a potency to concentration which is not possible in other ways. It is the power of *ekagarta*, or one-point-

edness of thought, which is effective in stimulating the centre of paranormal consciousness in the brain, commanding *susumna* where on the awakening of the *kundalini*, the Flame of Superconsciousness burns with transporting effect. The important point to be kept in mind is that *dharana* and *dhyana* are not ends in themselves, but means to an end and that end is the excitation of the Transcendent centre in the head. It is with the aim of stimulating this region and *susumna* that fixity of attention on one of the susceptible nerve-junctions, as for instance, the navel, or the heart, or the place between the eyebrows, or the palate, or the crown of the head is recommended by the ancient writers on Yoga. In his commentary on Yoga-Sutra 3. 1, Vyasa recommends concentration on the navel, heart, or light in the head for the same reason.

*Dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* are the three last steps toward the attainment of a fuller and richer life. In *samadhi* the mental flux becomes entirely restricted and the stream of thought becomes one with the object contemplated. In every spiritual practice the object kept before the mind being either the Deity with or without form or the Self or the Guru or some transporting object, like the lotus, or any iconographic representation, prescribed for meditation, complete absorption of mind in the object plainly signifies a transformation in the interior of the Sadhaka. In other words, it denotes the development of a new quality in his own consciousness which, assuming the image of the Deity or the Self or a lotus or a light, keeps the attention of the Sadhaka from wandering this way or that, and holds it completely engrossed in contemplation in the same way that a magnet holds a piece of iron tightly attached to it by the sheer force of attraction. It is the development of this alluring quality in his consciousness that keeps the Yogi entranced for hours without any sign of fatigue and with a beatific expression on his face. The arrest of thought in *samadhi* does not occur because of the restraint exercised by the Yogi, but, primarily, because the mind is rapt in the contemplation of a fascinating inner state which

may intervene either by imperceptible degrees or suddenly during the practice of *dhyana*. This is Yoga, the state of rapturous union between the fluctuating mind-stuff and the ravishing Universe of Consciousness which now begins to loom large on the mental horizon of the Sadhaka.

This is the reason why repeated mention is made in all Indian scriptures and books on Yoga of the incomparable bliss of *samadhi*. The ceaselessly repeated expression *Sat-Cit-Ananda*, the keyword of Vedanta to signify the Ineffable, meaning Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, is symbolic of the enrapturing transhuman state of consciousness experienced in *samadhi*. "He, the Self-existent Being is verily of the nature of Bliss," says the Taittiriyaopaniṣad (ii.7). "Having attained this Bliss one becomes blessed." That the aim of *samadhi* is Cosmic Consciousness is expressed by Atmopaniṣad (3) in these words: "Now about the Parmatman: Verily He is to be worshipped according to the precepts of the Vedas. And He (reveals himself) to one who, through the Yoga of Pranayama, Pratyahara and *Samadhi* or through reasoning meditates on the Adhyatma. He is like the banyan seed or like the Syamaka grain: conceived of as being as subtle as a hundred-thousandth fraction of the point of a hair, and so forth. He cannot be grasped or perceived. He is not born. He does not die. He is neither dried up nor burnt, nor shaken, nor pierced, nor severed. He is beyond all qualities, the Witness, eternal, pure, of the essence of the indivisible, one only, subtle, without components, without taint, without egoism, devoid of sound, touch, taste, sight and smell, devoid of doubt, without expectation. He is all-pervading, unthinkable, indescribable. He purifies the unclean and the defiled. He is without action. He has no Samaskaras. He is the Purusa who is called the Parmatman."

Bliss (*ananda*) with an indescribable state of Being is the keynote of the *samadhi* attained in Raja-Yoga, Laya-Yoga, Mantra-Yoga, Hatha-Yoga, Jnana-Yoga, Bakhti-Yoga, Karma-Yoga, and also the attribute of the Supreme, conceived by Vedantists, Sai-

vites, Sakts, Tantric Buddhists, Sahajas, Vaisnavites, and the rest. It is obvious from this that *pranayama*, *dhyana*, *niskama karma* (desireless action), *jnana*, *bhakti*, and *kundalini* ultimately lead to the same mental condition. Are not the ecstasy resulting from concentrated bliss, said to be far more intense than the highest transport experienced in the climax of the embrace of love, and the inexpressibly marvellous nature of the Vision sufficient baits to keep the attention of the Yogi riveted for the time being, completely immobilized and transfixed by the sheer transport of the experience? Just as a man, intensely watching an entrancing drama, becomes at times oblivious of his surroundings and does not even hear when spoken to and, by identifying himself completely with the play, ceases to pay attention to his body and the impressions coming from his senses in the same way multiplied a dozenfold, a Yogi, rapt in *samadhi*, becomes oblivious to his body, his senses, and the world to such an extent that even loud noises and other distracting factors fail to interrupt the state of utter absorption in which, for the time being, he is immersed. The difference between *dhyana* and *samadhi*, according to the Yoga-Sara-Sangraha, lies in this: violent sensory impression coming from outside can cause interruption in the state of absorption attained in the former, but fail to do so in the latter. It is about this state of ecstatic contemplation, when the mind is completely identified with the object contemplated, that the Knower, Known, and the process of Knowing, it is said, become one. In this condition with but a vestige of the ego left, even if he wishes it, the entranced Yogi cannot withdraw his mind from the state of rapt contemplation till the ecstasy is over. The only method of recalling Paramhansa Rama-Krishna from his ecstatic trances, it is said, was to pronounce a name of the Lord or some Mantra into his ear.

The difficulty experienced by intellect in understanding the real nature of *samadhi* is reflected in this passage from Mircea Eliade's *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom*\* ". . . It would be

\*Pantheon, New York, 1958.

wrong to regard this mode of being of the Spirit as a simple 'trance' in which consciousness was emptied of all content. Non-differentiated ecstasies are not 'absolute emptiness.' The 'state' and the 'knowledge' simultaneously expressed by this term refer to a total absence of objects in consciousness, not to a consciousness absolutely empty. For, on the contrary, at such a moment consciousness is saturated with a direct and total intuition of being. As Madhava says, 'Nirodha (final arrest of all psychomental experience) must not be imagined as nonexistence, but rather as the support of a particular condition of the spirit.' It is the enstasis of total emptiness, without sensory content or intellectual structure, an unconditioned state that is no longer 'experience' (for there is no further relation between consciousness and the world), but 'revelation.' Intellect (buddhi), having accomplished its mission, withdraws, detaching itself from the purusa and returning into prakrti. The Self remains free, autonomous; it contemplates itself. 'Human' consciousness is suppressed; that is, it no longer functions, its constituent elements being reabsorbed into the primordial substance. The Yogin attains deliverance; like a dead man, he has no more relation with life; he is 'dead in life.' He is the 'Jivan-Mukta,' the 'liberated in life.' He no longer lives in time and under the domination of time, but in an eternal present, in the *nunc stans* by which Boethius defined eternity. . . ."

The difficulty and the misconceptions arise from the fact that the state of "trance" or oblivion to the world is considered to be an unalterable characteristic of *samadhi*. This, in its turn, naturally creates the idea that during this condition human consciousness and human thoughts are completely suppressed and the Self or, in other words, the Light behind the intellect and mind, now free from all distractions, contemplates itself. It has been explained that if ego-consciousness were entirely suppressed the Yogi cannot bring the least recollection of what is experienced in *samadhi* when he returns to his normal condition. Second, what is more explicit, a perennial *samadhi*, as in the case of a Jivan-Mukta, can never be possible. If the elimination of the

human condition and the suppression of the intellect and are an invariable feature of *samadhi*, how can a Jivan-Mukta, at all attend to the needs of the body and survive for any length of time? The remark of Eliade that “the Yogin attains deliverance; like a dead man he has no more relations with life: he is ‘dead in life’” is far from the reality. The highest products of Yoga in India, Abhinava Gupta, Sankara, Ramanuja, Kabir, Nanak and others, were all men of action, with exceptional mental gifts and intellectual acumen, who brought glory to the land by their peerless contribution to the spiritual thought of mankind. For a correct understanding of Yoga, therefore, a new orientation is necessary, especially in the West. *Samadhi* can occur both with entrancement and oblivion to the world and also in full wakefulness as a normal feature of a higher state of consciousness. How this apparently paradoxical situation comes about will be explained in another work. But even in the case of the former, as for example in the instance of Ramakrishna, Chaitanya, and others, as also in some of the Christian mystics one is never “dead to the world” but actively engaged, more actively, perhaps, than is the case with normal men, in the moral and spiritual enlightenment of mankind.

# 6

## ***Kundalini, the Key to Cosmic Consciousness***

Before attempting to offer an explanation for the indescribable mystical state let us see how far the usually accepted idea of Grace can cover the varied manifestations of the phenomenon. In the utterances of prophets, mystics and saints themselves the factor of Grace in the achievement is again and again emphasized. The belief is of great antiquity, almost as old as religious experience itself, and is repeatedly expressed in the religious literature of the world. Among the Buddhists the ever-abiding Buddha is substituted for God. Considering the fact that from the very beginning the human mind has attributed the existence of all phenomena, inexplicable to it, to the agency of supernatural entities or divine beings, it is no wonder that for the still more incomprehensible mystical experience an added degree of divine favour has been thought to be a sufficient explanation for it. Until very recent times intractable diseases were often ascribed to the maleficent influence of evil stars or spirits, gods or goddesses even by the civilized populations of Europe and Asia, and exorcism or propitiation was resorted to, sometimes with adverse effects, to cure the malady. In India, even after the discovery of vaccination and with the full knowledge that it provides an effective safeguard against the disease, many credulous people side by side with the inoculation, present the customary offering

to the goddess Shitalla, the presiding deity of smallpox, to appease her. Similar practices are common in other lands also, and the practice of wearing amulets against bad luck and disease still continues in Europe among a large number of people.

In the light of this tendency of the human mind, ascribing the vicissitudes of life to the favour or disfavour of God or other divine beings, which was much more pronounced in the comparatively darker ages of the past, the factor of divine Grace to account for the mystical state was the only possible and reasonable explanation to offer for the extraordinary condition. Thus in the Svetasvatara Upanishad it is said that Svetasvatara came to realize *Brahman* through austerities and the grace of God. Katha-Upanishad goes a step further when it declares that neither by studying nor by listening to the scriptures can the Self be realized and that realization can be gained only when the Self desires to manifest itself. In the Gita the importance of grace is constantly stressed and in the last chapter Krishna promises liberation to Arjuna if he eschews all striving and comes to Him alone for refuge. Connected with the doctrine of Grace is also the stress laid on the imperative need of a really qualified preceptor or Guru among all the mystical sects of India, Tantric Buddhists, and Sufis. The homage to be paid to the teacher who initiates one into the knowledge of *Brahman* is emphasized to a high degree in the Tantras. The Guru is compared to God and even substituted for Him, and it is held that only through the flash of intuition, passing from the Guru to the disciple, like the passing of a flame from one lighted candle to another, can the transcendent state be attained.

Among the religious-minded, even during these days of unprecedented material progress, when satisfactory explanations for many of the hitherto obscure phenomena of nature have been furnished by science, an attitude of solicitation and surrender toward the Almighty Source of all creation at times of extreme mental stress, grave danger and in serious illness, where the success of human efforts remains in doubt, is common among both the scholars and the laity. This healthy instinctive gesture of

the human mind, still enveloped in the mystery of its own existence and always at the mercy of gigantic natural forces, acts as an inherent safety device to keep a frustrated sensitive mind from giving way completely under the strain. To ascribe the mysterious process of illumination of a seeker when he comes face to face with the awe-inspiring, indescribable phenomenon within himself, to the Grace of God or the divine in himself or to the favour of the Guru, has, therefore, been a natural confirmation to this instinctive tendency of the human mind. The object of the quest being God or the *Brahman* or the Self or some Deity the conclusion was natural that the encounter could not take place without His or Its concurrence and favour.

Grace has, therefore, come to hold a very important place among the seekers after transcendent experience of all shades of thought, of all religions and creeds, and of all epochs. Until the whole phenomenon of religious experience is explained to the satisfaction of the intellect, the idea of Grace will and must continue to hold sway in the present or in a modified form over the minds of the people. It should, however, be obvious to every keen observer that the various factors involved in every kind of genuine mystical experience are so strongly marked and persistent that, apart from the factor of grace, conformity to some still obscure biological and psychic laws is indicated as a precondition to the supreme experience. For instance, we find that purity of conduct, a high degree of morals, love of God or other Deity, constant thought of the end in view, and a passionate longing for the experience are necessary for success in the undertaking. So are self-denial, control of passions, and a heart aflame with the love of fellow beings. Grace is in a way a responsive gesture from the Unseen, a sign of assent from Divinity or a sort of permit from the Almighty Cosmic Forces to a deserving aspirant to approach the Ineffable, normally beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. But the very fact that certain norms of conduct have been prescribed for the guidance of seekers by every religion and every esoteric creed is a clear indication that Grace itself is de-

pendent on a number of factors that must attend the efforts of the seeker.

Conformity to a certain spiritual discipline betokens the need for preparation and effort, a tuning of the mind and body to the demands of a higher plane of life. At the present state of our knowledge what makes Grace an essential ingredient of transcendent experience is the incontrovertible fact that in the first place the supreme vision is granted only to an infinitely small minority out of the countless millions who strive for it, some even with a greater regard for the higher standards of conduct on the path than those who unexpectedly attain the crown, and, second, because the highest experience from the remotest past has come naturally to a few as a heaven-bestowed gift from their very birth. This aspect of the problem presents an almost irrefutable argument in favour of the position that Grace is indispensable for salvation, except when we recollect that in the case of genius, superior mental gifts and psychic powers as well as the possession of the talent are determined by birth, and the efforts of but a few in a vast number of competitors fructify much more rapidly or bear a more abundant and richer harvest than the others.

If we accept Grace as the sole factor responsible for success in any spiritual enterprise, we have then to concur with the view of those who consider success in worldly undertakings as a mark of divine favour or reward for previous *karmas*. Birth into an affluent and well-placed family, providing far greater opportunities for a life of happiness and prosperity, or a superior physical endowment at birth, enabling one to shine in athletics and sports and to outshine other equally hard-working contestants, should also then be ascribed to the same cause. Marginal escapes in accidents, cure of patients declared to be past human help, unexpected strokes of luck, winning in gambles and lotteries and other similar occurrences which, in absence of a rational explanation, we are accustomed to ascribe to chance should also then fall into the same category. When this is conceded then every occur-

rence which we cannot explain will have to be considered as God-ordained. In fact this is the usual attitude of mind of the devoutly religious. That not a leaf can move without command is an idea common to almost all great religions of the world.

Considered from this aspect, we can say with justice that all that happens in this universe, from the movement of atoms to the motions of colossal suns and gigantic sidereal systems, proceeds from the invisible Power that has brought this mighty creation into existence. As man is but a helpless spectator of a mighty drama, covering the whole of space, in which humanity occupies no higher position than that of a colony of microbes, or a small pebble on the bed of a vast ocean filled with rocks and boulders from end to end, always impotent before the mighty cosmic forces that sweep round him, regardless of his choice, he has only two ways open to explain the situation, either the whole drama is a monstrous play of lifeless forces ruled by laws in which his existence is a matter of accident, or the stupendous performance proceeds from an Almighty Intelligence, which ordains and rules all its activity. From this point of view everything that happens in the cosmos, every action we perform, every breath we draw, every pain we suffer, every joy we taste, every failure and success we face all come from God.

For such an attitude, there should be no difference in the success achieved in a worldly project or in a victory gained in the spiritual realm. Both are equally due to divine favour. But for One who desires to probe into the nature of things, to satisfy the cravings of the intellect, the phenomenon of illumination is as much a matter for investigation as any other phenomenon of nature. In spite of the fact that the robust constitution of a powerful athlete is determined to a large extent by his birth, no one can deny the fact that regular exercise, coupled with a healthy mode of life, develops his arms, thighs, chest and legs in away that gives a distinctive shape to his body, a symmetry to his limbs, and an agility to his movements not found in those who have not undergone the training. He becomes capable of prodi-

gious feats of strength not possible for ordinary men. We do not yet understand the whole process as to how the nerves and muscles coordinate to fashion the muscular body of a strong man, but we are in no doubt about the fact that proper exercise, nourishing diet, and a healthy way of life are necessary to bring this about. In the same way we know that apart from those who are spiritually gifted from their birth (as for instance in the case of the South Indian saint, Jnaneshwar, who wrote a commentary on the Gita at the age of sixteen, ministered to the spiritual needs of countless people, and left an inspiring collection of poems before passing away at the age of twenty-one), some sort of mental discipline, some kind of spiritual exercise, attention to morals, austerity with a passionate desire for the experience, nobility of action and elevated conduct have always formed a part of the efforts of those who achieved success in their spiritual quest. Even in the case of the born mystic and seer, as if a natural accompaniment to the condition, almost all these characteristics, it has been found, are usually present from a very early age in the majority of such people. In the light of these facts it would be as incorrect to say that success in spiritual endeavour is purely an act of Grace as it would be to ascribe the triumph of an athlete merely to his birth, without taking into account the other factors which contributed to the development necessary for success.

A study of the lives of medieval saints and mystics, in both the East and the West, makes it abundantly clear that a certain norm of conduct and behaviour, certain distinctive mental traits and certain peculiar modes of thought and action have characterized all of them, without a single exception; but unfortunately due to the fact that the biological factors underlying this condition have not been understood thus far, no attention has been paid to the classification and study of this outstanding class of men. Had this been done it would not have been difficult to locate the factors responsible for the mental condition exhibited by them, and to a lesser degree possessed by millions and millions

of people with inherent mystical tendencies, living in different parts of the earth today, irrespective of their religious belief and faith. It would have been found that, although there is no gain-saying the fact that some still unintelligible factors play a decisive role in the attainment of the final state of enlightenment, such as the as yet little understood factors determining the birth of human beings, there is a basic similarity not only in their temperament and behaviour but also in the ultimate condition, the vision, and the ecstasy. This clearly indicates the existence of a new form of psychic activity in their systems, about which they are in the dark, like the play of erotic passions at the age of puberty in those brought up strictly in a cloistered environment which is, sometimes, the cause of mystification to them.

It is, therefore, obvious that though indispensable until the law underlying the phenomenon is thoroughly understood, the doctrine of Grace does not explain all aspects of the problem. If Grace is the sole arbitrator in man's search for the Divine how does it happen that some possess the gift from birth while others gain it only after years of rigid self-discipline and sacrifice? If we attribute this difference to the effect of *karma* it means eliminating Grace, since in that case *karma* becomes the decisive factor, and if we attribute it to the will of God we then impute arbitrariness and partiality to Him. The explanation offered by some scholars that mystical experience is a plunge into the subconscious is as correct as it would be to say that the ecstatic condition is only a realistic state of daydreaming. It is well known that clever tapping of the subconscious, attempted by present-day psychologists, does not often reveal an edifying or elevating spectacle. There is too much of the crude, the grotesque, and the animal in that. The lower passions and urges are found parading there in a state of utter nudity. Even in the case of those who, in the subconscious depths reached in a state of hypnosis, furnish incontestable proof of clairvoyance, memory of former births, or precognition, there is no elevation of personality, no blissful encounter with the Well-spring of Life, no taste of deathlessness

and no intuitive flashes of eternal truths. It is a probe into the recesses of mind, no doubt, but of a mind which is the cause of our bondage and pain, the thin vapoury envelope of our thoughts, passions, and fancies, the illusive veil of *maya* that hides the stupendous, undifferentiated ocean of egoless and deathless Consciousness, which the seers of the Upanishads called the *Brahman* or simply *That*. It is a historical fact that almost all the top-rank Yoga adepts in India have been men of outstanding intellectual attainments and they are all known by the harvest of their genius, the monumental works they have left behind. Such a bloom of the higher faculties of mind could never have been possible by an unnatural way of life combined with practices which aimed only at the annihilation of thought.

Patanjali himself says that when the suppression of the modifications of the mind-stuff is accomplished, "Then the seer (that is the Self) abides in himself" (i.3). As for the means to be adopted for the restriction of these fluctuations, he says (i.12): "This restriction is by (means of) practice and passionlessness." Commenting on it, Vyasa writes: "The so-called river of the mind-stuff whose flow is in both directions, flows toward good and flows toward evil. Now when it is borne onward to isolation (*kaivalya*), downward toward discrimination, then it is flowing unto good, when it is borne onward to the whirlpool of existence, downward toward nondiscrimination then it is flowing unto evil. In these cases the stream toward objects is damned by passionlessness and the stream toward discrimination has its flood-gates opened by practice in discriminatory knowledge." For a proper understanding of the Yoga expounded by Patanjali, and for that matter of any system of Yoga or religious discipline that makes use of concentration as a stepping-stone to higher spheres of consciousness, it is of paramount importance to bear in mind that the object is not to create a blank or a void by a complete stoppage of the process of thinking, but to change its direction from the outer gross world to the inner subtle one. This change of direction does not imply immersion into reveries and day-

dreaming, but the complete absorption of thought into and its identification with the well-spring of Consciousness, the Self, which, shining by Its own light, becomes increasingly conscious of Itself through practice, until It completely overshadows the world perceived by the senses. The mind then freed from the domination of desires and sensory impression remains rapt in the contemplation of the marvellous, extremely fascinating inner world.

How in the light of these facts can it be admitted that *samadhi* itself results in the cessation of thought, caused by intense concentration or by a diminished flow of blood to the brain, or by the stoppage or slowing down of the breath? Had the phenomenon been confined to the practice of *dhyana* or Hatha-Yoga only, even then the solution would provide insurmountable difficulties in the way of its acceptance by a rational mind. But when we find that the exercise of intellectual discrimination, selfless action, constant thought of Divinity, passionate devotion and, above all, merely a gesture from the Unseen in the form of Grace can bring about the mystic state, the whole problem assumes a different aspect altogether. It becomes obvious that all the current explanations offered for this condition do not, in these circumstances, provide a satisfactory answer to the riddle. There must be some other factor underlying and common to all these which exercises a decisive function in the attainment of the divine objective.

It is a commonly observed fact that the normal human consciousness is able to apply itself only to a limited field of observation at one time, and this law operates in sleep and hypnotic conditions also. For instance, while reading a paper we can scan only one word and one line at a given instant and not have all the words and all the lines of that page before our mind at the same time. Similarly while trying to imagine the colossal body of the sun, our largest picture of it can only correspond to the widest landscape seen, and can never exceed the limits of the mental horizon present in us; although the sun is millions of times the size of earth, all we see at one time from horizon to

horizon is but an infinitesimal part of the earth. The experience of *samadhi*, as described by Yogis and saints, is a plunge into the Infinite, a dive into the plumbless depths of an unbounded Conscious Ocean or the vision of an all-pervading Omnipotent Being or the face-to-face encounter with a personified God, of unlimited power, in a halo of infinite glory, unlike anything seen on earth.

In all the genuine phenomena of this kind, the effect on the visionary has been always stunning, and the experience has been repeated, with variations of course, but always with a powerful impact on the mind. The question is: How can this occasional virtual metamorphosis of consciousness be explained in terms of the solutions suggested? Either the whole subject is delusive and the vision is only an overpowering hallucination, in which case the inquiry need not proceed any further, or the phenomenon is the outcome of an alteration in consciousness, resulting from an alteration in the functioning of the brain. Arrest of thought can at the most tend to keep the consciousness unruffled or, in other words, it can cut off the impressions coming from the senses and keep the flame of awareness absolutely steady for some time, but it cannot enlarge the capacity of consciousness to such a degree as to cause a staggering effect on the individual, wafted to a new plane of being, to infinity and immortality. Unless there occurs a radical transformation in the power of cognition of the observer himself, allowing him to compare his former state with the vision seen, the mystic state, as described by great Yogis and mystics, is not possible. The consciousness will continue to have, even in the condition of stillness of thought, the same limited capacity as is allowed to it by the brain.

The argument that in the condition of *samadhi* consciousness is dissociated from the brain and can, therefore, be realized in all its majesty and universal character is not valid for the simple reason that not infrequently both in the mystical state, occurring spontaneously, and in *samadhi*, brought about by Yoga, the Deity is apprehended as a personified Being, as in the case of *Vaishnava* saints, Sufis, and Western mystics, which is not possible without

the agency of the brain. Even in the case of *nirvi-kalpa samadhi*, which is considered to be the highest state of illumination, the yogi brings back the memory of the transmundane experience, when he comes again to his normal state, an impossible achievement unless the memory is awake all the time, demonstrating conclusively the continuing activity of the brain. There is no escape from the position that the rapturous descriptions of the ecstatic vision, described by those who had the supreme experience, could be possible only when they could retain a recollection of it in the normal state, establishing thereby a link between what they underwent in the trance condition and in their normal consciousness. This shows that in some way the surface consciousness continues to function in both conditions. If this were not the case the experience would leave no impression on the mind of the Yogi, as happens in syncope or deep sleep of which one has no recollection on awakening.

The view that the ego-consciousness completely ceases to operate at the time of mystical flight is contradicted by the accounts of the experience left by mystics, Yoga saints, and others, which clearly indicates that, even in such cases where the body shows all the outer signs of insensibility, the ecstatic state is still sufficiently alert to recall a memory of the extraordinary occurrence on returning to the normal state. "The Soul," says St. Teresa of Avila,\* "neither sees, hears, nor understands anything while this state lasts; but this is usually a very short time, and seems to the soul even shorter than it really is. God visits the soul in a way that prevents it doubting when it comes to itself that it has been in God and God in it; and so firmly is it convinced of this truth that, though years may pass before this state recurs, the soul can never forget it nor doubt its reality. . . . But you will say, how can the soul see and comprehend that she is in God and God in her, if during this union she is not able either to see or understand? I reply, that she does not see it at the time, but that afterwards she perceives it clearly: not by a vision, but by a certitude

\**The Way of Perfection*, Newman Bookshop, Westminster, Maryland, 1948.

which remains in the heart which God alone can give.” Here is an account of one of his *samadhis* given by Rama-Krishna Paramahansa himself: “One day I found that my mind was soaring high in *samadhi* along a luminous path. It soon transcended the stellar universe and entered the subtler region of ideas. As it ascended higher and higher, I found on both sides of the way ideal forms of gods and goddesses. The mind then reached the outer limits of that region, where a luminous barrier separated the sphere of relative existence from that of the Absolute. Crossing that barrier, the mind entered the transcendent realm, where no corporeal being was visible. Even the gods dared not look into that sublime realm, and were content to keep their seats far below. But the next moment I saw seven venerable sages seated there in *samadhi*. It occurred to me that these sages must have surpassed not only men but even the gods in knowledge and holiness, in renunciation and love. Lost in admiration, I was reflecting on their greatness, when I saw a portion of that undifferentiated luminous region condense into the form of a divine child....”

There is no denying the fact that in the case of *samadhi* brought about by Hatha-Yoga a deathlike state of the body can ensue as a result of more or less complete cessation of vital functions, caused by the almost complete interruption of breathing. The deathlike trance sometimes occurs naturally, as in the case of born mystics. But even in these cases the memory is partially active, since if this were not so, the Hatha-Yoga could not retain the memory of their visions. It is, therefore, obvious that the brain actively participates in inducing transcendent conditions of consciousness in a way which is a mystery at present. In some kinds of Hatha-Yoga *samadhi*, the Yogi loses all consciousness and, on returning to the normal state, has no recollection whatsoever of what he underwent in the trance. Yogis of this category demonstrate their mastery over their bodies by allowing themselves to be buried underground for days and even weeks. The astounding nature of this feat has led some present-day scholars

to link superconsciousness with a cataleptic condition of the body, and they expect one with a transhuman state of consciousness to be able to stop his breathing and suspend his heart action, making the body inert and cold, that is, corpselike in appearance. This is an entirely erroneous position which we shall discuss at length elsewhere. Here it is enough to say that a corpselike condition supervenes only in some cases of Hatha-Yogis and not in Yogis in general and among the former only a few attain to the supreme state of Transcendent Consciousness.

The fallacy of the notion that the arrest of thought can magically open the door to the Divine has already been pointed out. No method employed by man to experience a vision of the Transcendent Reality can ever be successful unless the human consciousness itself is developed to an extent where it can apprehend supersensory realms. Millions of Sadhus in India practice meditation for as much as twelve hours a day, and sit in the yogic posture even during the night, supporting their head and arms, while maintaining their erect position, on a flat piece of wood held aloft by a rod fastened to its middle, its other end planted firmly on the ground. They continue the practice for years without ever attaining *samadhi*. There is some mysterious element that has eluded the grasp not only of the adepts of the past but also the scholars of today, which must be present in all cases of a successful termination of the Yoga practice. The ancient masters, fully cognizant of the fact that in this enterprise success crowns the efforts of hardly one out of thousands of aspirants, attribute the anomaly to the effect of past *karma*, an explanation which they offer for the other inequalities of life also. But even admitting the operation of the law of *karma*, we have to accept the possibility that there must be some lack in the psychosomatic organization of the bodies of those who fail in this undertaking even after the most strenuous lifelong efforts to achieve a higher State of consciousness. Even those who believe implicitly in the law of *karma* do not hesitate to ascribe to a mediocre or inferior condition of the brain or to some defect in the body the failure

of those who never shine intellectually or never acquire a strong physique, in spite of constant efforts made to achieve distinction in either. When on the physical plane, with belief in *karma*, in order to account for the absence of success in the efforts of the inferior condition of the brain, or the flaw in the construction of the body, is fully recognized, why should not failure in a spiritual effort also be ascribed to its temporal cause, that is to some lack in the mental and physical constitution of the Sadhaka about which we are in the dark at present?

In ancient Indian scriptures one of the factors responsible for success in spiritual endeavours is held to be the predominance of the *sattva* element, tending to a harmonized condition of the body and the mind which clearly points to the dependence of the experience on a certain favourable condition of the organism. Even among the sattvic aspirants success falls to the share of one out of hundreds. The ancient masters selected their disciples with the utmost care, always according preference to the purest and the most earnest among those who sought guidance from them. But in spite of this hardly one out of them all achieved the state of illumination and made not only himself but his Guru also immortal by his outstanding brilliance. The predominance of the *sattva* element, mentioned in the Gita, does not explain the reason for failures among the Sattvics in whom the percentage of success is very low. What then are the factors indispensable for genuine mystical experience? Since none of the solutions offered for transcendent conditions of consciousness is able to bear close scrutiny, and at the same time it is impossible to deny the phenomenon in consideration of the overwhelming evidence, it becomes necessary to place religion and transcendent religious experience on a solid foundation, beyond the shadow of uncertainty and doubt that hangs over it today, and to locate the mysterious factor which is responsible for all their enormously varied manifestations from prehistoric times to the present day.

Those who fear that a thorough analysis of religion and transcendent truths is not desirable, since scriptural knowledge is

beyond the probe of reason and must always remain above it to avoid profanation, are inviting the very catastrophe which they dread. If faith is a mere bubble, liable to burst with only a pinprick, it would be far better to make the prick sooner and watch the reaction, rather than that it should continue to exist as a hollow mass of vapoury thought liable to burst and spread ruin around it at any time. The custodians of various faiths of mankind are often loath to allow a free and frank discussion of their tenets and dogmas because most of them lack the grand experience of the founder that brought their faith into existence. If they had it even once, the situation would be quite different and, confident of their own position, for true mystical experience engenders a faith that no fault-finding can shake, they would welcome healthy criticism, and by their very life prove the truth of the basic doctrines of all great religions, lying barren beneath a crumbling mass of superstition and a ponderous load of ceremonies, rituals, and practices, the cobwebs which every prophet, mystic, and seer tried to clear in his time, only to expose his own message to the same process of encrustation soon after his departure from the earth, to become more prolific and tenacious than the one he had swept away.

Those who hold that the founder or founders of their religion, their mystics and saints, had the supreme vision and performed their holy tasks of regenerating mankind as a special prerogative of God, and that they had been sent purposely for the mission assigned to them, do a great injustice not only to the lofty men who, acting as messiahs, tried to elevate mankind by their own example and precept, but also to the Supreme Source of all Creation by attributing arbitrariness, partiality, and nepotism to a system of existence bound by law from end to end. The Anthropomorphic conception of a God, dealing out favours left and right, watching over the actions of his children like a jealous father, propitiated by acts of remembrance and small offerings and always on the look out to punish those who offend him or forget to pay homage in the prescribed way, cannot but cramp man's

highly developed imagination and constantly rankle his penetrating intellect. We have, therefore, to search for some other explanation than those now offered to account for the inexplicable phenomena associated with Yoga and mysticism, and for the appearance from time to time of extraordinary spiritual prodigies, who tried in diverse ways to popularize noble ideals of love, brotherhood, and peace on the blood-stained arena of the earth.

There are still some people, though their number is now on the decrease, who ascribe visionary religious experiences to a pathological or hysterical condition of the mind. They make no difference between illuminative states experienced by a contemplative and the delusions of a psychotic. While it must be admitted that the biological factors which pave the way to spiritual experience can, in disharmonious states of the body or mind, or unfavourable heredity, cause pathological affections of various kinds, it is as fallacious to attribute the phenomenon of spiritual unfoldment to a morbid state of the mind as it would be to ascribe the conditions attending pregnancy and childbirth to an unhealthy state of the body. To stigmatize genuine religious experience as a kind of mania would mean to ascribe some of the loftiest creations of the human mind in the sphere of literature, art, philosophy, and ethics to the erratic efforts of a mad man. If we cannot understand the phenomenon it is not sensible to resort to solutions that savour of sterility. A far better course would be to make greater efforts to solve the riddle and to refrain from explanations until our knowledge has developed sufficiently to make a fruitful investigation possible. To ignore a factor that has been responsible for half the events of history and has proved the greatest incentive for human progress has been a serious omission on the part of those competent to make the investigation. Failure to meet the challenge of a phenomenon so remarkable, so far-reaching and widespread in its effects, so intriguing and baffling in its nature as religion has always proved to be, can mean only one of three things in

the present state of man's progress. Either there is a sense of defeat even before the exploration has been started, or an unaccountable prejudice toward religion and the Divine exists, or the present evolutionary development of the mind tends more toward the material and the gross than toward the spiritual and the sublime.

There is a class of scholars who, though themselves intensely religious and God-fearing, refrain from the inquiry on the plea that the sacramental and the holy should always remain beyond the touch of reason, and that the ways of God and the prophets are not amenable to intellectual investigation. Such an attitude of mind is not one of submission but of antagonism to the laws of God, for if He had decreed that reason should not meddle in the affairs of faith, then religion would have remained confined to the spirit alone and never encroached upon the province of the flesh. But since every prophet and every inspired sage tried to regulate the behaviour of the body so as to make mortal life in harmony with spiritual laws, this constitutes an invitation, even a command, to the intellect, which is a part of the body, to aid in making this harmony not only possible but also fruitful. For a number of reasons the modern intellect has shown an apathy toward the investigation of the phenomenon of religion which is completely at variance with the zeal evinced by it in other directions. The upshot has been that many infantile beliefs, dogmas, and practices still continue to obsess the mind of a large proportion of the human race, which is not only incommensurate with their intellectual stature, but also positively dangerous for their survival. The fact that a few intellectuals here and there put forward what appear to be rational interpretations of the religious idea and belief in defence of faith, does not serve to change the general atmosphere of doubt toward the expression of what is one of the fundamental urges of the human mind.

One other explanation that the Yoga trance or mystical experience is the outcome of self-hypnosis and suggestion, though

applicable in a number of cases, does not at all help us to understand genuine spiritual illumination. It can explain the ecstasy, the visions, and the exaltation, but not the permanent, uplifting effect of the experience on the whole of life. It cannot explain the certitude gained of immortality, or the magnetic influence exercised, or the, at times, psychic gifts displayed; and, above all, it cannot explain the dazzling light of genius shed from ancient times by some of the brightest stars of this constellation. In the literature of the world is there anything to compare with the sublimity of the Upanishads, the Bible, the Quran, the dialogues of Buddha, and the teachings of the Gita? Does any other work contain the same inimitable arrangement of words, the same depth, persuasive power and appeal?

If the answer to this is negative does it not mean that besides their divine mission these religious preceptors also rank among the greatest geniuses the earth has ever produced for the literary excellence of their works? The achievement appears all the more phenomenal when it is remembered that some of these authors were illiterate, some imperfectly lettered, and only a few of them having any pretension to scholarship. Besides them there are hundreds of comparatively lesser known ecstasies who, circumscribed by the environments in which they were born, shed their brilliance within the periphery of a small locality, but nonetheless, within their own province and relating to their own language, their works possess the same excellence as the more widely known contributions of the world-renowned founders of great religions and top-rank illumined seers.

We are, therefore, face to face with a mighty problem when we try to find an explanation for the mental condition of the religious teachers of the highest order. We have to account for the existence of not one but four outstanding attributes of front-rank mystic minds. They are Ecstasy, Moral Elevation, Psychic Powers, and Genius. This remarkable combination is confined to this class, and this class alone. Otherwise we find these attributes distributed singly and in too few cases. The combination of even

two out of them in one individual is extremely rare. The man of genius may not have moral elevation, ecstatic vision, or psychic gifts, a medium may not have moral stature, vision, or genius, and one prone to visionary states may not have the moral armour, psychic power, or the genius of the true mystic. In judging the prophet, the mystic, and the real saint we have to take the startling fact into consideration that he is in possession of all four rare and lofty attributes, each one of which, even when singly present, confers distinction on one possessing it. There is no difference except one of degree between a genuine prophet, mystic, accomplished Yogi, seer, and sage, and whoever out of them emerged with all these four gems glittering in his crown.

It is obvious that no explanation offered either now or in the past provides a satisfactory solution to the riddle. What makes the phenomenon more inexplicable is the evidence of authentic cases in which the whole gamut of mystical flight of the soul has been experienced by some persons who neither underwent any discipline nor were religious nor even believed in God. For some of them nature assumed the aspect of divinity, and they experienced all the emotions—the sense of awe, enlargement of consciousness, the sense of oneness with creation, overwhelming idea of deathlessness and unlimited knowledge—which are associated with mystical experience. It does not matter whether the ecstasy was repeated frequently or occurred only once or twice, but what is of utmost importance in judging the phenomenon is the inescapable fact that, apart from the category of mystics and Yoga saints, human consciousness shows the capacity of enlargement in the direction of a supersensory, widely extended state, in some persons even without any discipline or training, denoting a potentiality of the human body which the various methods are designed to develop. This clearly points to the existence of a psychic or organic activity in man by which this extraordinary metamorphosis of consciousness is effected.

Commenting on the significance of ecstasy, William James writes: “Saint Ignatius was a mystic, but his mysticism made him

assuredly one of the most powerfully practical human engines that ever lived. Saint John of the Cross\* writing of the intuitions and ‘touches’ by which God reaches the substance of the soul, tells us that— ‘They enrich it marvellously. A single one of them may be sufficient to abolish at a stroke certain imperfections of which the soul during its whole life had vainly tried to rid itself, and to leave it adorned with virtues and loaded with supernatural gifts. A single one of these intoxicating consolations may reward it for all the labours undergone in its life—even were they numberless. Invested with an invincible courage, filled with an impassioned desire to suffer for its God, the soul is then seized with a strange torment—that of not being allowed to suffer enough.’ ”

Where is this new centre of spiritual energy formed? From which mysterious source comes the vision, the celestial joy which, as St. Teresa says, “Penetrates to the very marrow of one’s bones,” the lucidity that sees to the very foundations of the universe and the sense of unity that merges one with All? Secular knowledge has no answer to this question. “To the medical mind,” says William James, “these ecstasies signify nothing but suggested and imitated hypnoid states, on an intellectual basis of superstition, and a corporeal one of degeneration and hysteria. Undoubtedly these pathological conditions have existed in many and possibly in all the cases, but that fact tells us nothing about the value for knowledge of the consciousness which they induce. To pass a spiritual judgment upon these states, we must not content ourselves with superficial medical talk, but inquire into their fruits for life.”

But an answer to it is provided in the Tantras, the Upanishads, Sufi literature, the self-revelations of Christian mystics, and the esoteric doctrines of almost all religions both ancient and modern. In fact the whole ponderous superstructure of religion that has been progressively gathering substance from prehistoric times

\**Collected Works*, translated by Otilio Rodriguez, Doubleday, New York, 1964.

contains the most effective answer to this question. The impulse to find the Creator, the search for magical powers to rise beyond the inexorable laws of the material world, the desire for immortality and the yearning for an ideal state of existence, which have been an inherent feature of the human mind, in crude and nebulous forms in the primitive state, must have a place of origin in the organism of man which not only produced the initial seed but has continued to water the growing plant for the past many thousand years in all the vicissitudes through which mankind has passed.

It is a striking testimony to the anomalous behaviour of the human mind that an impulse which received the greatest share of attention from the outstanding intellects during past epochs should, in this age of reason, be the target of a most irrational prejudice which refuses to accord even recognition to it, as a basic urge reaching up from the deepest strata of man's being. Nothing would, perhaps, appear more fantastic to a modern intellectual than to hold that the impulse to reach God or the desire to gain miraculous powers, immortality, or an ideal state of being does not merely rest on fancy or wish-fulfillment or any other imaginary cause, but rather on a solid basis provided for it by nature in mankind. Just as travel at incredible speeds in interplanetary space represents an achievement beyond the wildest dreams of the leading thinkers of the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, in the same way the discovery of the marvellous Fount of Spiritual Energy, which is at the bottom of all these impulses and desires, would place in the hands of the elite of the coming centuries a veritable mine of new knowledge and possibilities entirely beyond the imagination of the thinkers of our time.

# 7

## **The Biological Aspect of *Kundalini***

In general, when discussing religion and the gospels of the various faiths, we are apt to confine our attention to the period, very recent in the annals of man, during which the present well-known religions of mankind have been in existence, and we often entirely overlook the epochs prior to that through which man lived as a rational being, active and alert with crude stone implements to hunt, arboreal shelters, caves, skin tents or hovels, and with but the rudiments of savage culture to regulate his family and social behaviour. He continued to live in this manner, split up into various ethnic groups, and scattered over different regions of the earth, at the mercy of the elements, surviving with the greatest difficulty the awful rigour of the glacial periods that covered a large part of the earth for long periods of time. Through this period man was never without a religion, however crude and primitive, but a religion nevertheless. This religion often took revolting and fantastic forms and shapes, sometimes demanded horrible sacrifices and awful austerities, but there was always a religion of some sort to occupy his mind in all the epochs before the birth of existing faiths, varying from place to place and age to age.

Computing roughly, the current faiths, and even those of which some sort of historical record is available, do not extend

to more than five or six thousand years, whereas the primitive faiths cover a period of more than five or six times this time. It is true that these faiths were for the most part a jumble of myth, superstition, magical rites, sorcery, blood sacrifices and weird rituals in which our cultured minds can see nothing but dark distortions of the holy and the sacred. Nonetheless these wild and fantastic outpourings were the uncontrolled and unrefined expression of an inner urge that tried to find some sort of meaning in human life, and to make a distinction between the physical and the superphysical parts of man.

Primitive man made a distinction between the visible world and the unseen, between the corporeal body and the spirit, between the waking state and dreams, between here and the hereafter, between the sacred and the profane. He looked at the mysterious forces of nature with awe and an ever-growing desire to come in contact with the powers that controlled these forces, or the spirits that animated them. He ate, drank, frolicked and fought, worked and slept always under the shadow of mysterious powers that surrounded him, brought him abundance and dearth, disease and health, and in other ways ruled his destiny. In one form or another all the characteristics of the religious impulse, and all the symptoms of the inexpressible longing for the supernatural and the supersensible, were present in man in crude and amorphous forms for many thousands of years before the sages, the saviours, and the prophets came, one after the other, to refine the crude distorted beliefs and to humanize the cruel and revolting rites and practices that had gathered shape in his savage mind through staggering spans of earlier times.

Crude forms of Yoga must have been in use for thousands of years, in almost all parts of the earth, before it took shape as a regular system in India. The problem that now arises is how to account for an impulse seated so deep in human nature that it has persisted through many ages, perhaps even from the first glimmer of reason in man, overpowering his mind to such an extent that it swayed all his actions and thoughts and kept him

in thrall from birth to the moment of death, and even pursued him to the hereafter, instilling in him a desire for ceremonial burial and performance of rituals after his death. It certainly could not be a passing fancy or a transient reaction, created in his yet insufficiently developed, ignorant mind, by its first impact with natural phenomena and the effort to find an explanation for them. It could also not be the outcome of fear of the elements in a state of fury, the thunder and lightning, the wind and tide, the rain and storm, since he was accustomed and reconciled to them from the very beginning of his career on earth millions of years before. It is amazing that such lame explanations have been put forward by eminent scholars to rationalize an impulse that has been one of the most powerful governing factors of man's existence from primeval times.

From the unmistakable evidence before us it is obvious at no time in his chequered career was man free from the mental fervour characteristic of the religious urge. On the contrary, with few exceptions he seems to have been much more in the grip of the supernatural than the most credulous and the most superstitious of today. There is no other single factor, apart from the primary urges, that has maintained such a hold on the mind of primitive man, diverting his activity into channels that had absolutely no relationship with the satisfaction of his physical needs. He could have continued to survive without it, even after the advent of reason, as he had survived for millions of years before in the subhuman and animal stages. Viewed from a strictly rational perspective it can be said that the religious impulse, instead of aiding the development of reason, enveloped the mind with darkest clouds of superstition and fear, and continues to do so even now in the lower strata of underdeveloped societies. But at the same time there is no denying the fact that, side by side with his reason, this mysterious impulse of submission to unseen intelligent forces around him, and a dim sense of the distinction between this world and the other, between the propitious and unpropitious or the holy and the

unholy, spontaneously took shape in his mind. This did not disappear with the advance of the intellect, as shadows disappear at the approach of light, but became more rational, keeping the same hold on the seasoned intellect as it had done thousands of years before when reason was still in its infancy.

A few words are necessary to weigh the validity of some of the hypotheses put forward by modern scholars and men of science to account for the phenomenon of religion. One of these, the doctrine of the animistic origin of religion, was propounded by E. B. Taylor, an anthropologist of the nineteenth century, and by Herbert Spencer, a well-known writer on philosophical subjects. According to this theory the investiture by the primitive mind of all the objects and forces of nature with life or animation in the form of soul, spirit, or other invisible beings provides the basis for the appearance of the organized religions of later epochs. The idea of aliveness or animation in nature, it is supposed, originated in the mind of primitive man from the observation of death scenes, when the living principle seems to depart from the body; from dreams, hallucinations, trance conditions, or from what the savage could only interpret as the animated activity of natural forces. This idea, it is held, materialized first in ancestor worship and in funeral rites and ceremonies in the belief that the departed souls or spirits led an invisible existence of their own.

Apart from the fact that the practice of worshipping the spirits of the departed has not been universal, the theory of the animistic origin of religion fails to explain the various amorphous forms of religious motivation exhibited in the still earlier ideas of primitive man, as for instance, in totemic practices or in the notions of mana and taboo. There might have been other variations, too, of which we have no knowledge. So far as the animistic idea is concerned it speaks more in favour of the hypothesis that religion is the expression of a basic impulse of the psyche and from the very beginning started in the human mind as a distinction between the body and the spirit, this world and the

other, death and deathlessness, the permissible and unpermissible, the sacred and profane, as a spontaneous projection of an inner development that slowly and painfully, but at the same time inexorably, led evolving mankind to the lofty conceptions that now permeate the religious literature of the world. From a rational point of view, therefore, animism ought to be considered as an inevitable phase in the evolution of the religious impulse, and early mode of its expression, and not as the wellspring of religion itself.

For the hypothesis of the psychoanalytical school, founded by Freud, it is enough to say that the Freudian concept is not now fully accepted by some other psychologists. Another eminent psychologist, McDougall, believes in the existence of an animating principle or soul in the human body. The idea of a Father in heaven, who looks benignly after the created multitudes of humanity and provides for their needs, might well appear to casual observation as the projection of a wish for a protective father, but a deeper study of even such an anthropomorphic concept of God makes this interpretation untenable for the simple reason that the very idea of a superearthy Being, having his abode in high heaven, with divine attributes and able to command all the forces of nature, not being a fact of experience, must depend for its existence on a tendency present in the human mind to draw a distinction between the earthly and the Divine or between this world and the one above or beyond it, and is evidence of the influence of the deep-rooted religious feeling in man. Apart from this, if we cast a glance at the unrefined religious ideas and practices of primitive man we find that this was more often of a compulsive or exacting, than of a pleasure yielding or wish-fulfilling nature, a driving pressure reaching up from the depths of the primitive mind.

For further clarification it is necessary to point out that at present scholars are practically in the dark as to the nature of psychic energy, the source of all vital activity in the body, including that of thought and the rapid interplay of nerve im-

pulses. No one would like to contend the blatantly obvious fact that thought and consciousness do not fall into the category of material objects according to the current definitions of matter. Yet according to Samkhya-Yoga and Saivite schools of philosophy, the three widely accepted cosmogonic doctrines of Indian thought, dealing with *prakrati*, or matter, as an objective reality (in contrast to Vedanta, which treats it as an illusory appearance), not only thought but even the intellect and ego are the manifestations of matter in its ultra-subtle formation.

This classification is based on the introspective study of nervous impulses and analysis of thought in the highly penetrative supersensual states of consciousness or *samadhi*. The scientific value of an exploration carried out in this manner is far greater than that of the somewhat analogous investigation, carried out by men of science, on normal men through an analysis of their dreams, on neurotics and the insane or on hypnotized subjects for the diagnosis of mental and even physical ailments. The amazing knowledge of the nervous system and the flow of two kinds of nerve currents, about which science has no accurate information as yet, has also been obtained in the same manner. The founders of these philosophical schools had a very sound basis for their postulates, for in the superconscious state psychic energy, or *prana*, whether or not brought to a state of arrest, becomes clearly perceptible as an extremely subtle essence in the body, atomic or subatomic in nature, the connecting link between the material organism and immaterial life.

The impossibility of interaction between matter and the incorporeal spirit, without an intermediary connecting link, is an old problem of philosophy. Attempts to meet this difficulty have found an outlet in the various forms of monism, pantheism, Vedanta, and the like. Setting aside the philosophical aspect of the subject, all we wish to emphasize is the fact that the existence of an extremely attenuated biological substance that acts as fuel to the activity of thought and the play of the nervous impulses is a *sine qua non* of biology itself. The present lack of

knowledge of this vital biological essence, which is as necessary for the manifestation of life and thought as the fine metal filament in a glass bulb is necessary for the manifestation of electric light, invalidates many of the present-day concepts of psychology based on direct interrelation between the psyche and the physical organism. The moment the existence of this medium is accepted and, considering the highly sensitive devices that are now coming into use for the measurement of psychic activity, it should not take long to locate it. The present tendency to ascribe almost every obscure phenomenon of the mind, such as neurosis, lunacy, hysteria, ecstasy, dream and religious experiences exclusively to the subconscious must cease to obsess the intellect. In that event it would be saner to infer that the object affected is not the soul, an immaterial, universal substance, which cannot become diseased by material contamination. But it is the interconnecting medium or *prana* which is the fuel of thought and which when even slightly disturbed or disorganized creates the disintegrations and distortions of personality peculiar to affections of the mind

The view of Freud that religions originated in some primitive situations in which the sons combined to kill their father that they might possess his wives and concubines, but felt so guilty after the murder that they refrained from such possession, repented for their deeds through religious rites. The inaccuracy of this view is apparent. How could a solitary or even a few incidents of this kind lead to the establishment of a practice and the development of a compulsive need throughout the primitive worlds of such an overwhelming character as to sway the conduct, thought, and history of mankind to this day. Also how could the thought of performing posthumous religious rites, as a measure of repentance, occur to the sons of the murdered father if religion in some form or at least the idea of survival of the spirit of the departed was not present in their minds? If the idea was already current at the time it means that religion had originated before the incident.

Another hypothesis for the origin of religion put forward by

Wilhelm Schmidt, rests on the assumption that originally there was worship of one high or supreme God or a few high gods, which later proliferated into the worship of countless smaller gods, spirits, ghosts or demons among primitive people. The idea of a High God can only spring from the natural tendency in the human mind to seek out the author or cause of every object one confronts. The primitive mind had to follow this tendency in order to postulate a Creator or Father for the existence of the world round it, however crude that conception might have been, and however narrow and limited the cosmos might have appeared to its still imperfectly developed conceptual faculty. Thus there can be no dispute about any hypothesis presented for the existence of an Author or Progenitor of the world. But when it is accompanied by the idea of offering worship to this self-created Progenitor, combined with the concept of His unceasing control over the forces of nature, His incorporeality, omnipotence and immunity to death, the position becomes entirely different. It demands a deeper probing into the human mind, whether primitive or civilized, in order to discover the cause for all the emotional and intellectual ferment associated with religion from the very earliest times.

The idea of Durkheim that totemism was the most primitive and universal form of religion and that as the god of a clan the totemic principle could be nothing else than the clan itself, personified and symbolized, means that it was the society that evoked the experience of the Divine in the mind of primitive man by virtue of the power it had over him. The society required that, forgetful of his own interests, he should make himself its servant and submit to every sort of inconvenience, deprivation and sacrifice without which social life would be impossible. As the social structure of the group is expressed in spiritual ways, the individual came to believe that it was outside or beyond himself. This theory does not explain how the idea of the totem itself originated. Why should the primitive mind have imagined that a certain intimate relationship existed be-

tween himself and some animal or plant, or have regarded it as of particular significance for tribe and paid reverence to it? The very fact that an institution of this sort existed in more primitive forms of human society with the rudiments of worship and solemnity attached to it provides ample evidence for the existence of a peculiar impulse in the aboriginal human mind that expressed itself as an invisible relationship between itself and some animal or plant, some object or force in nature. The primitive mind invested it with life and the power to act evilly or benignly toward him, his whole family or clan demanding a reverential and solemn attitude or some sacrifice for its propitiation, with a promise of bestowing strength and power if worshiped with due ceremony. In this way the very existence of totemism denotes the activity of the religious impulse in rudimentary form.

Another school of thought traces the origin of religion to magic. It is, no doubt, a well-observed fact that in one form or another belief in magic has been widespread among primitive people all over the earth. This either took the form of spells or charms or rites performed to influence disembodied spirits, ghosts, demons, and other invisible forces of nature, for gaining the objectives not ordinarily possible, such as curing disease, granting favours, harming an enemy, winning an object of passion, or for other purposes. As in the case of fetishism, the symbol rested on the investiture of some natural object, an image, a pebble, a piece of bone, a feather of a particular bird or any such small thing or article with the power of warding off evil or granting desires. Another form of magic is contained in Shamanism, another very widespread primitive cult in existence even now among the Eskimos of North America, northern Asia and the primitive peoples of the Pacific and African regions. The Shamans, in a state of ecstasy or possessed by a spirit or some psychic power, exhibit curative, clairvoyant, or magical powers. According to J. G. Frazer, magic is the basic substance out of which religion has probably developed. Where magic failed to achieve the aims desired, the primitive mind, he says, turned to religious practices to attain them.

Magic is the companion and not the precursor of religion. Although it does not now form a part of the modes of worship and the rituals of the major faiths of mankind, it is inherent in their origins and in the lives or teachings of their founders under the guise of the "miraculous." Buddha sternly disallowed the use of psychic powers, but he admitted their existence, and the possibility of their development in one who strives for deeper insights. There is a tradition that he had to demonstrate his own magical powers when for the first time he returned to his own kingdom after enlightenment. The miraculous is no more than divinized magic. The eight *siddhis* or psychic powers, attributed to Yoga, are merely developed forms of magical skill. The magical feats of Shamans are duplicated every day in varied forms by mediums and sensitives of civilized communities. How many religious-minded people offer worship to the Deity purely as a mark of reverence and devotion without any ulterior, temporal or spiritual, objective? For a large part of mankind are not religious observances and prayer a propitiatory approach to Divinity for success in worldly pursuits, freedom from affliction or for the cure of an intractable disease by special favour or, in other words, by a miraculous intervention? There has been no time when religion was free of the magical and the miraculous. Sorcery, witchcraft, necromancy, crystal-gazing, prophecy, and all the other forms of magic-craft and divination originate from the same source in which the religious impulse has its birth.

The unmistakable similarity in the early crude religions, totemic practices and the mana-taboo concepts of primitive peoples, separated by insuperable barriers and unconquerable distances, clearly points to the fact that man's response to an inner motivation has been practically the same, marked by divergences due to varied environments and different mental levels of the tribes. The more elaborate magical practices, religious ideas, and rituals of the vanished civilizations of Sumer, Egypt, Chaldea, Babylon, Crete, and the Indus Valley show another phase in this development. The teachings of the later prophets, Saviours, and sages, known to history, demonstrate a further striking advance over

the former. But a close observation clearly shows the existence of an unmistakable vein of identity running through them. This is a clear indication of the fact that the development of the idea in man has proceeded in a visibly uniform manner earliest ages to this day. From this it follows that those adherents of the existing faiths, who hold that the last word on the subject is contained in their gospels, and that man has nothing more to learn about religious truths, adopt an attitude of resistance to the natural evolutionary growth of the religious impulse.

There are also other views about religion. Hegel considers religion to be a permanent and independent activity of the spirit next in importance to philosophy. According to Kant, religion consists in regarding all our duties as divine commands. Equating of morality with religion does not, however, explain the extremely varied phenomena of the latter. It is true that religion has a close relationship to morality or to what is permissible or not permissible, but the two are not identical. Moreover, what we treat as "divine commands" in the savage cults sometimes assume the form of horrible human sacrifice, which by no stretch of imagination can be classed as moral, although the attitude of mind that led to those sacrifices and other atrocities was undoubtedly religious. According to the idea of Rudolf Otto, the basis of religion is a feeling for which he has used the word "numinous"—a kind of divine respect distinguishable from mere fear or terror. In its lower form it may be regarded as the feeling excited by the weird and the uncanny. Included in this numinous feeling is the sense of mystery which is never absent from true religion.

Whatever the explanation offered, there can be no two opinions about the fact that this feeling, impulse, or attitude of mind, is not uniformly distributed among individuals, but radically varies in its intensity, from total preoccupation with it, utter neglect of the world, to the seemingly almost complete absence of this feeling. We see both types of people around us. There are those in whom religion assumes the form of a ruling passion who do not hesitate to sacrifice everything to satisfy the over-

mastering impulse in diverse ways, and those whom the idea of the supernatural, the religious or the sacramental leaves entirely unaffected. From the accounts of their lives we are left in no doubt as to the incontestable position that almost all the great saviours, prophets, mystics, and seers were men and women with an overmastering passion for the spiritual and the divine, which often drove them to such heights of sacrifice and suffering, heroic actions and courageous deeds, and to such levels of nobility and benevolence as have few parallels in any other sphere of human activity. Many of them faced death and martyrdom, torture and abuse without flinching or even swerving a step from the path they had chosen for themselves and which, under a direction surpassing mortal will and choice, they believed was chalked out for them by an Almighty Divine Power or Being.

For a proper study of the phenomenon of religion the correct way is not to concentrate only on the gospels, rituals, ceremonies, and their effectiveness as a means to assuage the spiritual thirst of the adherents of one particular faith or of all the modern faiths and creeds, but to focus attention on the mode of expression of the religious impulse from dim antiquity to the present day. In making this study, a fruitful method is to carry out an examination of the mental conditions, behaviour, and utterances of the individuals in whom the impulse attained its fullest expression.

At present, unfortunately, the world is sharply divided into two mutually antagonistic strata, one of which, the believers, profess implicit faith in the beliefs and tenets of their religion and the other, the nonbelievers, who deny as uncompromisingly the authenticity and truth of such beliefs. The result is that the whole issue has become controversial where religion is looked upon more as a matter of individual choice and opinion or, in plain language, as a hobby or even a fad, rather than as an indispensable activity of the mind or an innate urge of the human psyche. The devout are as responsible for this as the skeptics, for the simple reason that they surround the founders of their religions or their prophets and sages with such a background of

miracles and supernatural occurrences, or such an atmosphere of divinity, that they are elevated to the stature of superhuman beings, completely removed from the sphere of men of flesh and blood. This deification of a specially gifted class of mortals, who are as human as any of us, with the difference that they have an inordinate passion for the Divine and are prone to mystical states that permeate their whole life, and in most cases cause them to renounce all the pleasures of flesh, is causing more damage to religion and to the colossal possibilities it possesses for the unification and regeneration of mankind than all the other factors of human experience.

It is easy to see that not one of the explanations offered, either by men of science or by those of faith, is able to cover all the innumerable facets of the religious phenomenon. Most of the attempts made to present a solution, broadly speaking, fall into two categories. They either display an orchestration of learning which overawes the less learned into an acceptance of the theory merely by an exhibition of erudition or attempt an intellectual investigation on the basis of the data collected, both of them unsatisfactory methods for approaching the numinous. For a real understanding of the problems arising from religion it is necessary that the exponent should have undergone the experience himself. It is a curious fact that while in the allied branches of knowledge, as for instance biology, biochemistry and psychology, empirical study is considered an essential qualification for a writer in these subjects the equally if not more important and, more widely sought-after sphere of religion has been left open for the invasion of any charlatan, dabbler, or impersonator, who wishes to make it a hunting ground for his amusement or gain.

We have already arrived at the conclusion that, whatever the explanation offered for the existence of the religious impulse, there can be no doubt about the fact that in those who attained the higher peaks of spiritual ascent, and flowered as inspired prophets and illumined sages, the impulse was invariably strongly marked from the beginning or developed at some period in life.

No mere dabbler and no impostor ever rose to the heights of spiritual glory or ever found a place in the lofty cadre of the illuminati. The utmost that any exceedingly clever imitator or actor ever achieved was the unenviable reputation of a thaumaturgist or a magician. The highest products of spiritual discipline in every part of the earth enjoy a reputation for sanctity and nobility that has been seldom reached by any other class of men.

If a study is made of all the top-rank prophets, mystics, sages, and seers of the earth, whether they were Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Taoists, or Zoroastrians, it will be found that all of them, and they number hundreds, were in possession of all Transcendent attributes in varying proportions. Viewed dispassionately this singular combination of higher mental faculties in religious geniuses is of profound significance and can point to only one momentous conclusion which is that the religious impulse, acting in an inexplicable manner, blossoms ultimately into a personality which, from our generally accepted standards, is of the loftiest stature. This means, in other words, that the religious urge, functioning in a strong, well-marked form, is the harbinger of a higher state of consciousness, mental efficiency, moral enlightenment, and supernormal psychic gifts.

The following passage, from the Foreword to the Introduction to Zen Buddhism, written by Jung, helps to illustrate our meaning: "It could be objected that consciousness in itself has not changed, only the consciousness of something, just as though one had turned over the page of a book and now saw a different picture with the same eyes. I am afraid this is no more than an arbitrary interpretation, for it does not fit the facts. The fact is that in the texts it is not merely a different picture or object that is described, but rather an experience of transformation, often occurring amid the most violent psychic convulsions. The blotting out of one picture and its replacement by another is an everyday occurrence which has none of the attributes of a transformation experience. It is not that something different is seen, but that one sees differently. It is as though the spatial act of seeing were

changed by a new dimension. When the Master asks: 'Do you hear the murmuring of the brook?' he obviously means thing quite different from ordinary 'hearing.' Consciousness is something like perception, and like the latter is subject to conditions and limitations. You can, for instance, be conscious at various levels, within a narrower or wider field, more surface or deeper down. These differences in degree are often differences in kind as well, since they depend on the development of the personality as a whole; that is to say, on the nature of the perceiving subject."

Jung's own solution of the problem does not explain the reason for the transformation of consciousness, which he admits. For every manifestation of the phenomenon of religion he ultimately turns to the Unconscious, a self-invented magic key which a little verbal turning and twisting, can be made to fit into any lock. The transformation of consciousness does not, in the genuine cases, point to a subconscious content of the mind nor collective unconscious, from the primeval savage to the modern intellectual, but to a state of awareness which, transcending limits of time and space, can exercise the faculties of enhanced knowledge, clairvoyance, and prophetic vision for which psychology has no explanation to offer at all. This metamorphosis of consciousness is not of the nature of a subjective experience only, but coming with enhanced intellectual efficiency, supernormal psychic gifts, and moral elevation provides conclusive of the fact that the change has affected the very roots of being, and shows a difference of the same kind as is present between a man of mediocre mental ability and an intellectual prodigy. When we never allow ourselves to remain in doubt about the fact that there must exist a biological distinction between the former type of mind and the latter, it is really strange that we fail to allow the same difference between the common run human beings and the illuminati.

In the absence of a satisfactory explanation from any modern source we are driven to look into the ancient volumes relating

to the subject for a solution of the problem. When we do so we find that the phenomenon of transformation, transfiguration, conversion, transmutation, or rebirth is fully recognized by almost all the religions and occult doctrines of the past. 'While every faith and occult creed possesses its own method of physical and mental training to effectuate this transformation there is no unanimity among them either about the nature of the transformation effected or the factors responsible for it. At the present moment hardly anyone is prepared to acknowledge that there is a regular psychosomatic arrangement in the body by which approach to Divinity and higher planes of consciousness becomes possible. For the scholar as well as for the common man, religious experience is a subjective phenomenon, although its effects may give rise to objective results. In this context the remarks of William James\* are of particular interest: "When, however, a positive intellectual content is associated with a faith-state, it gets invincibly stamped in upon belief, and this explains the passionate loyalty of religious persons everywhere to the minutest details of their so widely differing creeds. Taking creeds and faith-state together, as forming 'religions,' and treating these as purely subjective phenomena, without regard to the question of their 'truth' we are obliged, on account of their extraordinary influence upon action and endurance, to class them amongst the most important biological functions of mankind. Their stimulant and anaesthetic effect is so great that Professor Leuba, in a recent article, goes so far as to say that so long as men can use their God, they care very little Who he is, or even whether he is at all. 'The truth of the matter Can be put,' says Leuba, 'in this way: God is not known, he is not understood; he is used—sometimes as meat-purveyor, sometimes as moral support, sometimes as friend, sometimes as an object of love. If he proves himself useful, the religious consciousness asks for no more than that. Does God really exist? How does he exist? What is he? Not God, but life, more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life, is, in the last analysis, the end of religion.

\*Longmans Green, New York, 1903.

The love of life, at any and every level of development, is the religious impulse. At this purely subjective rating, therefore, religion must be considered vindicated in a certain way from the attacks of her critics. It would seem that it cannot be a mere anachronism and survival, but must exert a permanent function, whether it be with or without intellectual content, and whether it be true or false."

It is not God who is used by men but, in actual fact, it is God who is using mortals for a divine purpose which He alone knows. Do we know why we lean so heavily on the Supreme Being who is the cause of our existence? Do we know why we exist at all? If not, our attitude to the still unfathomed mystery of creation should be more reverent and more in keeping with our stature as rational beings. It is the upward pull from Universal Consciousness, or call it God, exerted through the psychosomatic channel of *kundalini*, which is at the bottom of this attitude of reliance on God displayed by the religious-minded of all denominations. What our minds habitually reflect must have its source in the invisible Fount from which all our healthy instincts originate. This is the reason for the idea often expressed by mystics of all countries that God reciprocates in a larger measure the love of His devotees and is always at least as eager to receive the love-sick soul into His arms as the soul is to reach Him. The very existence of the idea of God and its close interconnection with the manifold hopes and fears of the human mind provides in itself a strong testimony in support of the stand that religion is inseparably connected with the whole biological and mental structure of man.

The success of surgical operations and medicines in the treatment of diseases depends entirely on the inherent tendency, present in the living flesh, to fill up and heal the wounds. and to react to the chemical agents that enter into the stomach or the bloodstream. If this tendency did not exist it would be dangerous, even fatal, to perform surgical operations, and medicine would prove of no avail in the treatment of illness. The same law

must be operative with varying degrees of effectiveness at the bottom of all religious and occult practices, which means, in other words, that unless there exists a possibility in the body to respond spontaneously to such efforts to create the mental and physiological condition necessary for religious experience no amount of hard work done to achieve success in the enterprise can ever be actualized in the smallest degree. The body and mind are so closely interrelated that a change in one is directly or indirectly reflected in the other. Therefore, any exercises or practices undertaken for causing any kind of change in the mind, as for instance inducing *samadhi* or attainment of paranormal faculties, cannot but have a corresponding effect on the body. To deny that the human body is an indispensable factor in the development of a higher state of consciousness or for the exhibition of supernormal faculties amounts to a negation of the objective reality of the phenomena.

Those who believe in religion and the validity of religious experience must also believe in the capacity of the human body to exhibit the phenomena either as a characteristic present from birth or as a hidden potentiality that can be developed with exercise, or that may spontaneously declare itself at some later period in life—in all the three cases manifested in a manner for which we have no rational explanation at present. If for the expression of normal human consciousness a delicately adjusted intricate biological apparatus is absolutely necessary, how can this unalterable condition be dispensed with for the even higher manifestation of Superconsciousness. We do not think in these terms because we are accustomed to treating the normal human body and normal human consciousness as the last achievement of evolution or created by God, a most erroneous notion stemming from self-conceit. Those who do not believe in religion can dismiss the whole subject as pure fabrication of superstitious minds, as a creation of priests or on any other ground. But those who believe cannot escape the responsibility of finding a rational basis for their faith. They cannot say that religious experience is a

random or erratic phenomenon, possible only for some people purely by divine favour or as a peculiarity present in their minds, without any relation whatsoever to the biological construction of their bodies, a by-product of the human psyche, active as a matter of accident, and not as an inherent tendency of every mind.

It is as correct to say that religious striving and occult practices somehow create a particular condition of the mind in which mystical experiences become possible without affecting the body, as it would be to hold that self-mortification helps in causing visionary states in ascetics as it is pleasing to God. These explanations do not help to solve the riddle but, on the other hand, make it more complicated and difficult. How can spiritual exercises change the normal behaviour of the mind and make it capable of exhibiting entirely inexplicable paranormal phenomena, and, at the same time, why should asceticism be a feature of the religious impulse, effective to such a degree as to create sometimes an awful thirst for self-torture and self-denial? It is the height of folly in such an important issue to explain one enigma in terms of another, thus creating a vicious circle that can never lead to the heart of the problem. It is because we are often accustomed to regard the religion in which we are brought up merely as a legacy of a prophet or a sage or a line of prophets or sages, rather than as an inherent thirst of the human mind, dependent for its existence on the biological makeup of the organism in the same way as other basic urges exist that we deplorably fail in tracing the origin of all phenomena connected with religion to their real source, and leap from one wrong supposition to the other without arriving at the right solution of the problem.

If we believe in the efficacy of Yoga or other systems of discipline designed to lead to transcendent conditions of consciousness and psychic insights, we will have to accept the existence of a responsive element in the body which is affected by these exercises in such a way as to lead to the development or emergence of new faculties and extraordinary mental states in the organism.

This element can take the form either of a general tendency in the body, a predisposition present in the cerebro-spinal system or of a regular mechanism designed by nature to lead the human mind to higher states of consciousness by its own normal activity or by stimulation through some kind of mental and physical exercise. Neither the religious impulse nor the phenomenon of transcendence to which it leads in rare cases can be purely psychic in origin, for in that case, apart from the fact that there can be no uniformity in its manifestation, there would arise no need for somatic disciplines to develop it. There can be no rational explanation of religious and supernormal psychic phenomena other than that there does exist an agency in the mind-body combination which is at the back of the religious impulses and all the consequences that flow out from it. There is no other way to account for the extraordinary happenings of history caused by the impact of illumined men and women, who time after time changed the course of the lives and thoughts of millions of men, and even now continue to exert a tremendous influence in shaping the history of the modern world.

Yoga or any other system of spiritual discipline can, when successful, lead to higher states, or, we can even say, to normally inaccessible levels of consciousness, not by any unnatural methods causing arrest of thought or respiration, as is sometimes supposed, but by a hitherto unthought-of transformation of the human brain. This transformation occurs by means of a mechanism already present in the body. In the initial stages, or where a permanent transformation is not possible, there may occur transient interludes of lucidity or superconsciousness, known as *Samadhi*, in the case of Yogis and ecstasy or rapture in the case of mystics. Permanent transformation results in a *Jiwan Mukhta*, Cosmic-Conscious Yogi, or in an illumined sage. In every case the transformation depends on the awakening of *kundalini*. Protracted practice of meditation and *pranayama* in a determined *Sadhaka* may lead to the awakening of the serpent power in a few cases. In other cases either a comatose condition, resembling

animals in a state of hibernation, with nearly suspended animation and insensibility or self-induced hypnosis, with highly attenuated breathing, numbness of the body and hallucinatory experiences, may crown the laborious efforts of some of the practitioners out of the thousands who undertake the discipline. The rest remain barren of any appreciable results. The awakening of the serpent power by even the most strenuous Hatha-Yoga methods is a rare occurrence, and rarer still is its ascent to *sahasrara* and its permanent abode in this region, when only the transformation of the brain is accomplished and Cosmic Consciousness attained.

The spinal cord, with the reproductive equipment at one end and the ventricular cavity in the brain at the other, is the largest repository of the life force, or *prana*, in the human body. This life force is a biochemical substance of a most complex formation, extremely subtle and volatile, having its roots probably in the subatomic levels of matter. Belief in the efficacy of Yoga as a time-honoured method of self-realization *ipso facto* means belief in *prana*, for the whole science of Yoga is built on the possibility of employing *prana* as an instrument for effecting a metamorphosis of the brain and raising it to higher levels of perception. In every form of Yoga, with a meditative technique or discipline of the breath, the first object intended to be influenced is *prana*. The fact that physiologists have no knowledge of this medium is of no consequence, for up to very recent times there was no knowledge of vitamins either. If science has not yet been able to fashion instruments delicate enough to detect this extremely subtle essence, it does not mean that it does not exist. Yogis have differed among themselves about the utility of the various methods employed to gain transcendent knowledge about the nature of the Ultimate Reality, but there is no dispute among them about the reality of *prana* as the sole agent responsible for success in any enterprise undertaken to gain higher states of consciousness. From the time of the Vedas to the present day, a long period of nearly four thousand years, the existence of *prana* as a workable instrument of salvation has been accepted by generation

after generation of Yogis and occultists of India, and their combined testimony carries a weight that cannot be lightly brushed aside.

The manner in which the cerebro-spinal system, with the reproductive organs at the lower end, functions as the evolutionary mechanism is one of the most remarkable instances of the ingenuity and economy of nature. The vast network of nerves covering the whole body, penetrating to every hair and pore of the skin, to every cell of the flesh and bones, to every fibre of the muscles and to the tiniest fragment of every internal and external organ, in addition to discharging its highly complex normal function as the communication system of the body, performs also the supreme task of initiating and carrying into effect the evolutionary impulses that have been instrumental in raising man to his present intellectual stature, and are even now at work to mould his brain toward a higher state of cognition or, in other words, to a transcendent state of consciousness. The method by which this is effected, like all other devices of nature, is extremely simple when it is once thoroughly understood. But as long as it is not understood, like other still hidden secrets of existence, it appears so baffling and complicated as to be almost beyond comprehension. The aim of this writing is to draw attention to this amazing but, at the same time, hitherto entirely unsuspected activity of the nervous system. What we have recorded is based word for word on accurately observed personal experience, combined with unmistakable objective proofs, which shall be mentioned at their proper place in another volume. This is not all. Our experience is supported not only by the revelations contained in the vast mass of ancient literature on *kundalini* in Tantras, manuals on Hatha-Yoga, Upanishads, Puranas, Buddhist documents, and other sacred lore of India, but also by the life stories and utterances of scores of well-known Yoga saints who flourished at various times during the last more than one thousand years and are, therefore, recent figures of history.

Described in terms of modern physiology the activity of the nervous system, in the evolutionary as well as in the reproductive

sphere, lies in extracting from the mass of tissue surrounding every nerve fibre an extremely subtle but highly potent essence that may be well designated as concentrated life force, which, travelling along the routes described by the innumerable nerve filaments, ultimately reaches the spinal cord, and the brain, the well-protected storage plants of this highly complex substance. A fraction of it spills over into the nerve junctions and plexuses as also into the nerve clusters lining the various organs. In the case of normal men and women a fine stream of this vital essence trickles through the nerves into the reproductive organs, where it vivifies the sex cells produced by the gonads. It is the existence of this concentrated nerve essence in the spermatozoon and ovum that bestows fertility and the power of transmission of hereditary characteristics through the genes. The essence permeates every atom of the reproductive cells.

From the upper ending of the spinal cord another fine stream of this living energy filters into the brain as fuel for the evolutionary process continuously at work in the organism. Variations in the size of this stream determine the intellectual and aesthetic development of an individual. The stream is comparatively large in the case of men of genius and top-rank intellectuals. The variegated expression of genius depends on the particular region of the brain which the cranial stream irrigates and develops. In the accomplished Yogi the nervous system functions in a manner that almost all the subtle *prana*, extracted by the nerves, a large part whereof was formerly expended in procreative activity, now irradiates the brain, resulting in the transformation of consciousness. The whole body, including all the vital organs, participate in this activity of the nervous system in the case of an adept in whom *kundalini* makes her permanent abode in the *sahasrara*. In the case of those in whom ecstasy is experienced at intervals with or without entrancement, this extraordinary activity of the nervous system occurs only for a limited duration at intervals leading to the emergence of a higher consciousness for the time being.

## 8

### The Physiology of Yoga

Before proceeding to describe the mode of operation of the divine Energy, *kundalini*, and the methods devised from ancient times to arouse it to activity, it is necessary to enter into a brief discussion about one point. If *kundalini* is the only natural device in human beings, implanted by nature to lead to transcendent states of consciousness, how has it been possible for the followers of other schools of Yoga and the adherents of other religions to attain the mystical state without awakening this power, and even without having the knowledge that such a force exists designed to stimulate it? Furthermore, if there exists a power centre of this kind at all in the human frame, how has it escaped the notice of modern anatomists who have probed into every nook and corner of the body, and why when special methods are available to activate it, is the knowledge of the mechanism so rare, even in India, and the number of successful initiates so extremely small as to be almost negligible? There is another important point also: since *kundalini* is the ultimate source of all the phenomena proceeding from any type of Yoga or any kind of spiritual discipline, how is it that even accomplished Yogis, who achieved transcendence by means of Raja-Yoga, Bakhti-Yoga or Karma-Yoga, or mystics have not been able to detect and locate

this hidden power centre as Hatha-Yogis and Tantrics have done. These points are very relevant to the issue and they indirectly support our hypothesis. We have already arrived at the conclusion that religion, in order to be an inherent attribute of the human mind, and not merely an artificial creation of prophets and sages, must have an independent base in the psychic makeup of man, necessitating a complementary biological apparatus as well. The only way by which this psychosomatic contrivance could make its presence felt is to create an awareness in the surface consciousness of the purpose it has to accomplish. This awareness in the initial stages can only take the form of an unaccountable impulse or desire tending, often erratically, in the direction which it is designed to take, like the indefinable sexual propensities of children before they begin to understand the significance of the urge. We have seen how the impulse started in primitive man with the ideas of totem, taboo, death and birth ritual, animism, supernaturalism, and the like, and developed to the point of the worship of spirits, ghosts, living creatures, or natural objects of various kinds and thence rose to the adoration of supernatural entities, celestial beings, gods and goddesses, or one All-pervading God.

During this process of evolution that took man aeons to accomplish there must have been born, at one time or another, peculiarly constituted men and women of the same category, whom we now consider to be mystics, mediums, and sensitive, possessed of unaccountable psychic gifts, but in other respects conforming to the same level of mental development as others. Those of them who were a little more intelligent and tact than the rest, counting on the awe and wonder they created, must have occupied commanding positions as did the prophets of antiquity, and from that state of authority prescribed, to satisfy the curious crowd, some methods and ways to attain the same powers as they themselves possessed. The appearance of these uncommonly gifted men from the earliest epochs of man's existence should not be in the least surprising. On the contrary it can be

taken to be perfectly in accord with the natural order of things. Just as there existed variations in the mental level, physical development and the emotional content of the various people, as is the case even today, there must have also cropped up now and then some odd individuals possessed of uncanny powers, like the medicine-man we even now see among the so-called underdeveloped people, still adhering to religious customs and rituals in vogue thousands of years ago. Their later prototypes still survive in the form of Shamans, voodooists, witchdoctors, and others among the existing primitive societies of the earth.

The inexplicable appearance of mediumistic properties in some persons—telepathy, clairvoyance, divination, and other psychic gifts—cannot be attributed to mere accident, since the attributes are so well defined and the phenomenon has occurred so persistently from earliest time that it would be entirely irrational to ascribe it to the freakish sport of chance. Eliminating chance, the only other rational way to account for it is to accept the possibility of such talent in the psychic endowment of man, about which we are still in the dark, and which is naturally manifest only in an extremely small percentage of people even in this age. This logical conclusion again points to a still obscure activity of the human brain, and the existence of a special region or a centre of psychic energy that gives rise to it, in other words, to *kundalini*. These born psychics, part and parcel of the human society from the beginning, are in all probability the instruments designed by nature not only to create interest in the occult and the supernatural, but also to revive interest with their amazing performances whenever it threatens to diminish. It is probably this class of men to which Patanjali refers in his Yoga-Sutras as possessing *siddhis* from birth. By acting on the already present religious impulse in the people of the time, they must have been responsible for the creation of that burning enthusiasm and even frenzy that usually marked the religious zeal of primitive man. In the later epochs this enthusiasm, milder and more refined, was kindled by the oracle and the seer, the more evolved proto-

types of the primitive awkward, but still incomprehensible, psychics, known under the names of medicine-men, witchdoctors Shamans, and the like. Even in this age of reason they are the objects of deep interest for countless millions of people in both the East and the West who are irresistibly drawn to them to assuage their own thirst for the unseen and the supernatural.

The positions of power commanded by these primitive knowers of the occult, as well as their own inherent curiosity and interest, must have acted as a powerful incentive to enterprising individuals, as they do even now, to learn the secrets of the art in order to reach the same position as well as to appease their own thirst for knowledge of supernatural forces with the added motive to harness them to their own service. This must have led to a search for methods and practices to induce the same conditions of mind naturally present in the psychics, and in this search the latter must have played the role of teachers, not always honest ones, to maintain their own position and prestige, which ultimately resulted in the strange practices, orgiastic rituals, hard penances, bloody sacrifices, and bizarre ways of worship that characterized the religious observances of primitive man. Their brutal aspect was in accord with the pattern of his behaviour and the level of his mental development. It could not be otherwise, since it would have been entirely unnatural had primitive man been an angel in one respect and a devil in another.

This accumulated store of rites, practices, and exercises, pruned and refined from time to time through the ages, altered and changed by contact with other people and tribes, or revised later by specially gifted magi, oracles or priests, continued to be in the possession of mankind in different parts of the world until, with the further advance of civilization, the practices were again modified and refined by the prophets, sages, and seers, who began to replace the magi, the oracle, the Shaman, the medicine-man and the witchdoctor of primitive peoples. Among the people segregated by sea, deserts, or other natural barriers, the old methods and practices continued to survive until recent times.

As all these methods and practices came into existence as a result of the operation of a naturally active *kundalini* through the ages, and as they were improved and revised from time to time by those in whom the power was naturally awake or was developed in rudimentary forms, it is in keeping with our concept that even without any knowledge of *kundalini*, or any inkling of the practices of Hatha-Yoga, the adherents of other faiths and the followers of other schools of Yoga achieved success with these methods in a limited number of cases. The parent of all systems of religious discipline and ritual from the very beginning of the religions impulse has been *kundalini* alone, and no other agency, human or divine has evoked this impulse.

As regards the other point it is enough to say that there is no separate organ in the body that acts as an evolutionary mechanism for the manifestations associated with *kundalini*. The function is performed by the cerebro-spinal system as a whole through the direct agency of the reproduction mechanism at the base and a still unidentified, silent centre in the brain, designated by Indian Savants as *Brahma-rendra* or the Cavity of *Brahma*, which becomes active on the awakening of *kundalini*, resulting in an altered activity of the nervous system. This activity can be verified and measured with proper methods devised for the purpose when the nature of the alteration is understood. It is sufficient to say that the location of this extremely sensitive zone, and the extraordinary sensations to which it gives rise, have been described in precise terms by some of the great mystics and Yoga saints of India. In fact, the paramount importance of this region in every kind of Yoga and every form of meditative technique is universally recognized among all the schools of religious discipline and esoteric practice in India, and finds repeated mention not only in the ancient scriptures and Yoga texts, but in the folklore to such an extent that the close association of this region with success in any form of religious effort is almost as well known as other common concepts of religion.

Like the first whitening of the sky at dawn to herald the ap-

proach of the sun, the first sign of success in any form of religious striving comes from this region. It is the place of conjunction of the canal coming from the spinal cord and the ventricles of the brain. This cavity and those adjoining it are filled with the cerebro-spinal fluid, said to be a derivative from the blood and fairly akin to plasma. The whole vast structure of Kundalini.. Yoga revolves round this cavity and the spinal canal. For those unacquainted with human anatomy it is only possible to indicate the approximate location of the area on the basis of an inner perception of the region or the sensations experienced there. This, to the best of our knowledge, has also been the means of observation of the ancient masters of this Yoga, which accounts for the variation found in the number of the *nadis* and the *cakras*, and also in their location. It is for this reason that accurate observation and study by experts is necessary in order to place the subject on the footing of an exact science. The effects produced by an awakened *kundalini* are so multilateral from the very beginning to the final stage that once a thorough investigation is started a host of possibilities will come into view, one after the other, by which the biological nature of the phenomenon, from radical changes in the behaviour of genital organs to alterations in the activity of the nervous system and the brain can be indisputably established. There is no method so adequate to demonstrate the objective reality of religious phenomena as an investigation carried out on *kundalini*.

The view expressed by Arthur Avalon in his fine book, *The Serpent Power* that the ascent of *kundalini* is always attended by a coldness of the body is applicable only to a very limited number of cases and is not a general characteristic of the awakening. He says: "Kundalini when aroused is felt as intense heat. As Kundalini ascends, the lower limbs become as inert and cold as a corpse; so also does every part of the body when She has passed through and leaves it. This is due to the fact that She as the Power which supports the body as an organic whole is leaving Her centre. On the contrary, the upper part of the head becomes

‘lustrous,’ by which is not meant any external lustre (Prabha), but brightness, warmth and animation. When the Yoga is complete the Yogi sits rigid in the posture selected, and the only trace of warmth to be found in the whole body is at the crown of the head, where the Shakti is united with Shiva. Those, therefore, who are sceptical can easily verify some of the facts should they be fortunate enough to find a successful Yogi who will let them see him at work. They may observe his ecstasy and the coldness of the body, which is not present in the case of what is called the Dhyana-Yogi, or a Yogi operating by meditating only, and not rousing Kundalini. This cold is an external and easily perceptible sign.”

A normal awakening does not arouse intense heat. There is only a pleasant sensation of warmth, beginning from the *muladhara* and spreading to the whole of the body, in the first stages of the Awakening. It is universally accepted by the ancient writers that “heat” resides in the umbilical centre to carry out the function of digestion. It is, therefore, in accord with this idea to say that *kundalini* burns in the navel. There is also nothing unusual in the expression that the awakening of the serpent power in the umbilical region is revealed by the sensation of a great fire. In fact the ascent of *kundalini* is like the pouring of liquid flame into the various *cakras* and finally into the cranium. It may also resemble the brilliant lustre shed by a prolonged flash of lightning, accompanied by noises like thunder. But whether compared to a blazing fire, or flame, or lightning, the idea of intense or burning heat is not included in the expressions for that would introduce an ominous feature into the phenomenon. The repeated mention of the moon in the *sahasrara* and her cool, refreshing lustre, made in the ancient works on Kundalini-Yoga, provides ample evidence for our position.

There is no doubt that moderate heat, causing the body to sweat, is caused by *pranayama*, but it is of the same type as is generated by any violent exercise. The word *tapas* used from the Vedic times connotes religious fervour associated with devout

worship, self-discipline, and penance, and not to any so-called “mystical heat.” *Siddhis* and divine manifestations proceed from *tapas*, as mentioned often in the scriptures. For this reason the only sense in which *tapas* can be understood is intense spiritual effort and austerity and not in the sense of heat, mystical or otherwise. It is often the tendency to find hidden or cryptic meanings in plain words and expressions used by the old authors which cause confusion in the understanding of the phenomena associated with religion and the occult. The expressions “mystic psychic fire-force” and “the Secret Psychic-Heat is born” used in the subjoined passage from the book, *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* by W. Y. Evans-Wentz, do not refer to any burning heat, as is also clear from the other passages in the book, but rather to the simple phenomenon of the Awakening, which is here attributed to the transmutation of the seminal fluid. This is explained by Evans-Wentz himself when he says: “Bodhisattvic mind is an honorific term for the male generative fluid or ‘moon-fluid.’ In the present context it is symbolical of the transmuted sex-vitality, whereby the psychic-heat is produced as are all occult psychophysical powers.” It is in this sense that the aforementioned passage, quoted below, is to be understood:

“This is the Tibetan letter-symbol for the personal pronoun ‘I’ written, ཨ, transliterated as HAM and pronounced as HUM. It is white in correspondence with the sexual fluid, which its visualization sets into psychic activity. The brain psychic-centre is conceived as the place whence sexual functions are directed; and, therefore, the HAM is to be visualized as in the chakra called the Sahasrara-Padma, or Thousand-Petalled Lotus. The HAM symbolizes the masculine aspect of the mystic psychic fire-force; and, as a result of its union with that of the feminine aspect, symbolized by the short A, the Secret Psychic-Heat is born. The Goddess Kundalini is roused from her age-long slumber to ascend to her Lord in the pericarp of the Thousand-Petalled Lotus. She first ascends, like a flame, to the Manipura-Chakra, of which the navel is the hub; and the lower half of the body

is filled with the mystic fire. Thence she continues her ascent; and in union with her Lord, the Divine One, the whole body is filled, even to the tips of the fingers and toes, with the Secret Psychic-Heat."

The glowing radiance in the head and the light circulating through the nerves gives to the Sadhaka the vivid impression of an inner conflagration, not attended by heat, or of an internal effulgence which fills his whole mental horizon and seems to surround him in and out like a vast circle of flame. Gunjari-pada, quoted by Eliade, also says: "Neither scorching heat nor smoke is found." In the light of this fact it is easy to understand why the ancient savants, in the internal phenomenology, refer to it as the play of fire and compare it to intensely bright objects or heavenly orbs. There is, however, no doubt that in all cases of a healthy Awakening the digestive power is highly augmented. The ancient authors refer to it as increase in the digestive heat: "(with proficiency gained in Pranayama) The digestive-fire (Jathar-Agni) of the Sadhaka is highly increased" "All his limbs become graceful," says Shiv-Samhita (3. 34), "and he partakes of delectable, wholesome foods with great enjoyment. Overflowing with strength and energy his heart is always brimful of joy. (All) these qualities necessarily manifest themselves in the body of the Yogi." Burning heat is created in the body when the *prana* energy, released by *kundalini*, instead of rising through *susumna*, its natural channel, streams partly or wholly through *pingala* or the solar *nadi* on the right side of the spinal cord. It is by arousing the serpent power through the solar nerve that the extraordinary feats of staying naked under ice for prolonged periods or drying wet sheets of linen, wrapped round one's bare body, in Arctic cold can become possible.

The phenomenon of *kundalini* is fraught with so many possibilities that volumes will be required for a detailed treatment of all of them. For our purpose here it is enough to state that the awakening can occur through *ida* or *pingala*, instead of through *susumna*, or partly through one of the former and *su-*

*sumna*. Where this occurs spontaneously in a forceful manner gravest danger threatens the life and sanity of the unfortunate man or woman. This, so far little understood, morbid awakening of *kundalini* is the root cause of several forms of insanity about which psychiatrists are still groping in the dark. In those in whom the cerebro-spinal system has attained the required degree of maturity the powerful psychic energy set free by *kundalini* invariably makes its abode in the head, raising the consciousness to transcendent planes. Any attempt made by such practitioners to divert the divine energy to this or that nerve channel or this or that *cakra* is fraught with grave danger. In the case of less developed Sadhakas, the force can be raised through *ida* or *pingala* for the performance of a few amazing feats at the cost of the performer's own spiritual welfare and happiness. As *kundalini* is the base of all Yoga practices, the extreme need for caution on the part of those who take to these practices haphazardly, without thoroughly informing themselves about the subject, cannot be overemphasized.

Coming now to our point: the spinal cord, which plays a most, important role in the attainment of higher states of consciousness, is a longish white cylinder, oval in cross-section, with an inner grey and outer white matter. Unlike it, the cerebellum and the cerebral hemispheres of the brain have an internal bulk of white and an outer thin layer of grey matter on their surfaces. The cord is encased by the vertebrae, which form a strong bony covering around it. The vertebral column in man consists of thirty-three vertebrae, which fit into one another giving flexibility to the backbone. The direction to sit erect during the course of meditation in Yoga practices is designed to avoid curvature of the cord and the central duct, in which new processes occur and new forces are generated as a result of the pressure exerted on the brain and the nerves by fixity of attention and *pranayama*. In human beings the spinal cord does not extend the whole length of the spinal column, but ends at about the second lumbar vertebra, that is, the second vertebra below the thoracic region. In animals with tails (cow, horse, etc.), the spinal cord extends

virtually the whole length of the vertebral column. The spinal canal in man does not, therefore, extend to the base of the spine but ends at a point higher up. At the terminus of the spinal cord a cluster of nerves descends below, resembling a horse's tail in appearances to which the name *cauda equina* has been given.

Thirty-one pairs of spinal nerves arise from the spinal cord, each pair arising in one spinal segment. These segments are not distinguishable internally. Each spinal nerve arises from the cord in two bundles: the dorsal and ventral roots. It is held that the dorsal roots contain afferent, or sensory, nerve fibres, and the ventral roots efferent, or motor, fibres. Along either side of the spinal cord is a chain of ganglia, called the sympathetic chain. These ganglia are connected to another chain of ganglia in front of the vertebral column, which gives rise to the sympathetic plexuses, known as prevertebral ganglia. The third set of sympathetic ganglia situated in the organs is called terminal ganglia. These three sets of ganglia are interconnected among themselves and also with the spinal nerves. Alongside the sympathetic plexuses there is another system of nerves known as the parasympathetic system. Both the sympathetic and the parasympathetic nerves constitute the autonomic nervous system. The most important of the parasympathetic nerves is the vagus, or wandering, nerve, arising from the brain, and passing on the left and right of the spinal column. Most of the visceral organs receive a double innervation, that is both the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems send their nerves to them. In general the fibres from each of these two systems have antagonistic actions on the various organs, which they innervate.

The sympathetic impulses accelerate the heart action and the parasympathetic slow it down. The motility and secretion of the digestive tract are increased by impulses from the parasympathetic nerves, and reduced by sympathetic ones. The same is true of other organs. This augmentative and inhibitory or excitatory and depressive action of the autonomic nervous system has been indicated by the ancient exponents of Hatha-Yoga by the terms *hot* and *cold*. Thus *pingala*, or the solar *nadi*, on the right side

of the spinal cord, which rising from the *muladhara cakra* after criss-crossing with the *ida* at the sites of the various *cakra* is said to be hot, and *ida*, the lunar *nadi*, on the left side of spinal canal, which rising from the same place and criss-crossing in the same manner, is said to be cold. The two *nadis* are designated as sun and moon to signify their hot and cold effects. The descriptions of the ancient masters about anatomical and physiological details need not to be taken too literally for the reason first, that their knowledge was drawn from subjective experience and not from actual anatomical study and, second, because it was the tendency of the times to clothe physiological knowledge and for that matter knowledge of other natural sciences in metaphoric language, since empirical methods of observation were still in an incipient stage. This holds true not only of Yoga but also sciences like therapeutics, astronomy, and chemistry, as is obvious from the treatises on these subjects written at that time.

Our task will become easier if for a moment we divest ourselves of the illusion that the ancient writers on the subject were infallible, and deal with Yoga, occult literature, and mystical experience in the same manner, as the first empiricists dealt with vast store of amorphous theoretical material, dating from ancient times. Alchemy, astronomy, geography, medicine, biology and other natural sciences that came to them as a legacy from the past were treated in this way. A reluctance to study empirically religious phenomena can only tend to discredit religion in the eyes of those with a scientific bent of mind, and to create doubt and antagonism against a basic reality and a basic hunger of the human mind. If religious truths are not demonstrable and must always be accepted on faith it means perpetuation of existing conflicts between the men of faith and the men of science, between religion and religion, creed and creed, and a perpetuation of doubts and uncertainties. But if they are demonstrable in order to be lasting, that demonstration should be as possible now as at any time in the future.

Instead of entering into hair-splitting discussions, the wiser

course at the present stage of our knowledge is to concentrate on the essentials and to find a way out of the labyrinth by treating only those facts that possess some probability and are not difficult to fit into the modern concepts of anatomy and psychology. In order to conform to this mode of presentation it would be necessary to avoid many of the time-honoured technical terms and expressions employed by writers on this form of Yoga, reducing it to the position of a sectarian cult, and to clothe it in a language more suited to the rationalistic tendencies of our age and in keeping with the universal nature of the subject itself. Unless we take the untenable position that for the expression of higher states of consciousness the human body and the brain need not come into the picture at all, and that superconsciousness can be achieved by a sudden plunge into the Unknown, it becomes necessary to leave no possibility unexplored in order to find some sort of agreement between the assertions of the ancient authors, writing under great handicaps on account of the general ignorance about the human body, and the modern highly developed knowledge of physiology. In this enterprise the most difficult task is to establish the first slender connecting link, after which with present-day methods of research it would not be difficult to locate the whole chain responsible for the phenomenon.

Resuming our description of the *nadis* we can safely identify *susumna* with the spinal cord and its central canal, and *ida* and *Pingala* with the sympathetic and parasympathetic chains on the left and right of it. *Pingala*, it is said, rises from the right testicle and *ida* from the left one. This point needs clarification, since the sympathetic and the parasympathetic systems innervate the Visceral organs and are also distributed in other parts of the body. The preganglion neurons of the sympathetic chain rise from the thoracic and lumbar segments of the spinal cord, and those of the parasympathetic from the brain and the sacral sections of the cord. In the light of this fact the scrotum or the testicles cannot be treated as the place of origin of these two *nadis*. The actual position is that the whole area from the perineum to the navel

is thickly supplied with nerves from the central as well as the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. A large proportion of these nerves line the reproductive organs of both men and women. These chains of nerves are also joined by other nerves distributed over the right and left thigh, leg and foot. In an extended state of consciousness the nerve current moving through the chain of nerves designated as *pingala* distinctly appears to be hot and that moving through the *ida* cold. The perception of these two currents by introversion is one of the first developments that occurs on the awakening of *kundalini*.

The first centre, or *muladhara cakra*, which plays a decisive part in the awakening, can be safely identified with the nerve junction between the anus and the root of the male organ. This is the most sensitive and the most important part in all the operations conducted by *kundalini* on awakening. We have purposely refrained from identifying the *nadis* and the *cakras* with this or that nerve or plexus, and will leave this task to the efforts of more competent investigators, who possess a thorough knowledge of the nervous system and the brain. The information we are recording is based on experience and inner observation. Thus it is impossible to be precise as to the exact nerve among the thousands or the exact spot which is involved in the operation. The specification of the nerves and their locations referred to here are tentative and should, therefore, be considered as mere approximations, subject to verification and study by other observers. This will avoid controversies and conflicts of the type that have occurred in the past. For the aim of this work is not to establish a new creed or to denigrate the existing ones, but to find a common basis and a common formula for them all. An error would be gratefully rectified, for it is by gradual expansion of his knowledge and correction of his mistakes that man has arrived at his present height.

In brief, it is a divine mechanism, which, with the awakening of the serpent power, springs to action to effect the liberation of the soul. The exponents of *kundalini* believe that the human

body as a microcosm of the universe can duplicate the process of creation, maintenance, and dissolution of the Cosmos. They hold that so long as She lies coiled up above the *muladhara cakra*, closing the aperture to *Brahman-rendra*, the embodied soul remains awake to the world, but when, with proper efforts, She is aroused and drawn upward to unite with Her spouse, Lord Shiva, in the *sahasrara*, the Yogi, now asleep in relation to the sensory world, awakens to the realization of his own divine nature. Her upward movement to the *Sahasrara* is, therefore, called *laya-karma*, or the process of dissolution, and Her descent back to *muladhara* is *Srsti-karma*, or the process of creation. For this reason Kundalini-Yoga is also called Laya-Yoga. One accomplished in this form of Yoga is thus said to be in possession of the power to create and destroy the world at will.

The idea that the serpent power is a limitless source of energy capable of investing the initiate, who has succeeded in arousing it, with entire command over the forces of nature, has no basis in reality, and is a product of the exaggerated accounts, contained in the ancient manuals, about the marvellous attributes of *kundalini*. These attributes aptly apply to the cosmic aspect of the creative energy, or *shakti*, but when applied to the individual the limitations that mark off the puny human creature from the almighty Cosmic Being must be applied to the individual aspect of *kundalini* as well. If it were not so, the very notion of "rousing Her from sleep" or "conducting Her to the *Sahasrara*" or that "She should be led upward as a rider guides a mare with the reins", or that "She, the young widow, is to be despoiled by force" or that "With practice a Yogi becomes skilled in manipulating her" and other similar expressions used by ancient authors would be unthinkable. It is therefore obvious that the power alluded to is a potent life energy, normally in a dormant state, but capable of being activated with proper efforts directed to that end.

Considering the nature of the phenomenon to which it gives rise this energy can be compared with a powerful organic electric current of which, on the awakening of *kundalini*, the body be-

comes the generator. About this marvellous organic force the world of learning has no knowledge except that provided by Tantras and books on Hatha-Yoga. One part of this amazing energy, soaring high above the cloud of sensory knowledge, remains in perennial rapport with the pure, eternally bright sky of Universal Consciousness, while the other, rooted deep in the body, is governed by the laws of biology, depending for its activity on the nourishment provided by flesh and blood.

The fact that *ida* and *pingala* are said to arise from the left and right sides of the scrotum and the *susumna* from a place corresponding to the root of the generative organ, or that many of the practices of Hatha-Yoga, such as the position of the heels in the *siddhasana* and *padmasana* where they press upon the genital region or the repeated expansion and contraction of the anus by the manipulation of the anal sphincter muscle, advocated as a measure to facilitate the awakening, should not be understood to mean, as is sometimes supposed, that these practices are merely aimed to cause a stimulation of the sexual region and that the awakening of *kundalini* is no more than the reabsorption of the seminal fluid into the blood or its sublimation to cause ecstatic conditions of the mind. The actual fact is that the cerebro-spinal system, with the centre of consciousness at the top and the reproductive region at the base, actuates in man the twofold purpose of the evolutionary as well as the reproductive mechanism. The three nerve channels, *ida*, *pingala*, and *susumna*, are the arteries of communication between the two extremities or poles. The confluence of *ida*, *pingala* and *susumna* at the level of the Ajna Cakra is known as Triveni. How deeply the concepts connected with *kundalini* have entered into the fundamentals of Hinduism is clear from the high degree of sanctity attached to the confluence of two or three sacred rivers, where millions bathe on certain auspicious occasions to wash away their sins or to gain liberation in symbolic imitation of the purgatorial office performed by *Shakti* (*kundalini*) on awakening. The solar and lunar *nadis* intersect with *susumna* at the various

Cakras. Finally at the Ajna Cakra, the place between the eyebrows, *kundalini* takes command of the mental functions, opening a new channel of perception, the sixth sense or the Third Eye, signifying the ascent to a higher step of the evolutionary ladder on the part of the successful initiate. From the Ajna Cakra, *ida* and *pingala*, as is said, proceed to the right and left nostrils respectively, and the *susumna* enters the *sahasrara*.

If empiricism has not yet been able to locate the channel of communication between the two poles of this vital, two-pronged mechanism in the human body, the force of circumstantial evidence gathered from objective sources, even without subjective experience, would compel it to do so in the nearest future. The sympathetic and parasympathetic gangliated chains, the spinal cord, the reproductive system, and the brain are the greatest repositories of *prana*, or the organic vital essence in the body. This subtle organic medium is spread in every cell and part of the body, and functions as the connecting link between the superphysical cosmic *prana* and the flesh. The term *prana* repeatedly mentioned in the books on Kundalini-Yoga, usually refers to this subtle organic medium, the bridge between spirit and matter. In the living body this medium is manipulated by cosmic intelligence residing in the immaterial universal *prana* or *Pranashakti*. The marvellous functioning of the organic bodies, the cyclical memory of the genes, and the efficiency of the reproductive mechanisms, which stagger the intellect, depend on the superhuman intelligence present in the universal *prana*, the Source of all life in the cosmos. Cosmic *prana* exists as a boundless universe of conscious energy, as an invisible self-generated all-pervasive current of intelligent electricity of illimitable power and unlimited speed, which, coming within the range of internal perception of the Awakened Man, brings into his consciousness other universes and other subtle energies that go into the making of this marvellous creation, whereof only an infinitesimal part is apprehended generally, by man with all his senses and intelligence.

The evolutionary-cum-reproductive mechanism in man functions in a manner in which the evolutionary aspect of it is completely shielded from the sphere of direct perception. While we are made acutely aware of the existence of the procreative activity of this mechanism by the constant presence of romantic and amorous thoughts in the mind and the behaviour of the sexual organs, we have no awareness of a direct impact on our thoughts from the evolutionary aspect of it. Indirect evidence, complete almost to the point of being conclusive, is furnished by the so far imperfectly understood religious impulse and the unassuageable thirst for knowledge in the human mind, which, because of a hitherto fundamentally mechanistic conception of evolution, we have deplorably failed to explore and grasp. *Kundalini* is the key to the evolutionary mechanism. It is, therefore, but natural that it should be connected with and have influence over the spinal cord, the autonomic nervous system and the brain, for any stimulus to evolution to be effective must start from the cerebro-spinal directorate, and in order to be fruitful must have its closest cooperation and assistance at every step. Why it should be connected intimately with the reproductive system is abundantly clear from the very nature of Kundalini-Yoga, and the explanations furnished by its exponents. With the awakening of *kundalini* the successful initiate is in a position to utilize the tremendously potent *prana*, or organic life force, present in this region, for the important task of remodelling the brain and the nervous system to the point of evolutionary perfection, where man begins to approach the stature of a superman, adorned with new channels of perception and a Transcendent Consciousness, able to penetrate to the supersensible, subtle regions of the universe. This is the reason why Kundalini-Shakti has been revered by the ancients as a goddess and the deepest homage and worship offered to her.

The question posed at the beginning of this chapter as to when methods to manipulate this power centre were practiced in India and were probably known to other countries also, why

the knowledge of it is so scarce and the number of successful initiates so exceedingly small, provides in a way its own answer. Almost all of those who had this spiritual power centre naturally active from birth, not being aware of the biological nature of the force at work in their bodies, usually attributed all manifestations and developments to divine favour, and where things went wrong to satanic or demonic influences, since from the very beginning all the phenomena proceeding from *kundalini* were attributed to super natural or divine agencies. In the case of those in whom the awakening occurred through prolonged effort, the Grace of God or the favour of the divine Shakti provided the answer to the weird manifestations and extraordinary occurrences that marked the course of the new development. That this has been so is fully corroborated by Tantras and other ancient works relating to *kundalini*. In dealing with *kundalini* we deal with a divine power centre in man designed to lead him to a knowledge of his own immortal, superearthy nature by a process of sifting, purification, and remodelling, which, ordinarily might take hundreds, even thousands, of years. There must, therefore, be a certain state of preparedness and maturity, both mental and physical, in all those in whom the self-launched efforts terminate in success. Even with all these difficulties the number of those in whom the awakening, whether present from birth or resulting from practice, was successful in different parts of the world is surprisingly large. With the knowledge now available and the rapid rate of progress in almost all directions, the proportion of success is now likely to be a hundred times greater, if this divine quest is earnestly taken up by the luminaries of this age.

It hardly needs to be explained that for any system of Yoga or any spiritual effort to be successful, it is necessary that there should be a responsive agency in the body which the exercises can stimulate or influence in order to attain those states of consciousness in which mystical or any other spiritual experiences become possible. Without an agency of this kind and without some objective proof, establishing the existence of a superior

mental state, beyond the normal capacity of the brain, as has been demonstrated by almost every genuine prophet, mystic, and saint, the validity of the experience in the case of those whose minds exhibit no other extraordinary development can be open to serious doubt. It is obvious that for any marked enhancement of the efficiency of the mind, beyond the normal limit, and for the exhibition of a more concentrated form of consciousness a biological readjustment of the brain would be absolutely necessary. Therefore every successful product of Yoga, religious effort, or occult practice must succeed in stimulating the device designed by nature to bring about the transformation, provided all the other factors combine to elicit a favourable response to such endeavour. This means that every effort which found access to supersensory states of consciousness must have, wittingly or unwittingly, made use of the evolutionary mechanism through its master key, *kundalini*.

The reason why so many conflicts and controversies arise between the adherents of different creeds, different systems of Yoga, or different schools of the occult is that the law underlying the manifestations has not been correctly understood. Can it be possible that the transcendent realm is so devoid of law that there is no uniform procedure to regulate the entry to it? Even such an idea is unthinkable. The prevailing belief that religious striving or Yoga in any form is undertaken to procure union with the divine, resulting in liberation from the bonds of flesh, is at the root of this misconception. The very concept of liberation connotes the idea of escape from the clutches of a painful world into the shielding arms of a merciful Deity waiting to receive the afflicted soul. This in turn implies that this desire in the heart of man to seek freedom from the world with its sorrows and burdens in the quest of the one Reality is inherent in the scheme of creation or, in other words, is in accordance with the will of the Creator. If this is conceded it would logically lead to the preposterous conclusion that all this stupendous universe has been brought into existence to place embodied souls deliberately

in such a tormenting environment that, as soon as they possess the intelligence to understand their plight, they would fervently wish to be rid of it. Such a conception is entirely incompatible with the idea of a merciful Creator. The argument that bondage and emancipation are the fruits of *karma* and that the soul itself and not the Creator is responsible for it, does not provide a satisfactory answer to the problem. Conceding that karmic laws exist, do we know from which point they started? If not, how can we say where they will end? For all we know man might have to evolve to the stature of a god-like being in the millenniums he has still to live on this earth, and our efforts to interrupt this march of evolution by a premature withdrawal from the world might not be in accordance with the cosmic plan about the future destiny of mankind.

Just as every form of study stimulates the centre of intelligence in the brain, and every form of artistic activity trains the muscles of the hand, the fingers, or the throat, leading to a better coordination between the organ and the mind, or as regular exercise tends to develop a particular group of muscles to which it is directed, so every form of religious exercise, Yoga, or occult practice tends to stir up *kundalini* which, in turn, by using a more potent *prana* and the precious substances, present in the reproductive secretions, starts an amazing process of remodelling designed to form a supersensory compartment in the brain—the ultimate object of the evolutionary impulse still active in man. The generally expressed view that in Raja-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Karma-Yoga, or Jnana-Yoga, or in other forms of religious striving, *kundalini* is not awakened is not correct. It has already been discussed that for any religious effort to be successful it is necessary that it should press on some natural mechanism present in the body, failing which no change in consciousness can ever be Possible. Swami Vivekananda voiced the same truth when he said, “Whenever there is any manifestation of what is ordinarily called supernatural power or wisdom there must have been a little current of *kundalini*, which found its way into the *susumna*.”

Unless there exists a natural arrangement already present in the brain by which its efficiency can be enhanced in the direction of supersensory or extrasensory perception no amount of mental training can lead to states of consciousness radically different from or superior to the normal pattern which is the common heritage of almost all mankind.

It cannot stand to reason that *kundalini* can be awakened only by violent and forcible methods as are embodied in the various schools of Hatha-Yoga. On the other hand, we can more realistically classify such methods as unnatural. If the existence of an evolutionary mechanism in the human body is conceded, it will also have to be admitted that its activity must be dependent on the stimuli of a certain type, coming either from the outside world or from the freely acting mind of the man himself. It will also have to be accepted that some of these stimuli must be more and some less effective in evoking a response, as is the case with every other organ in man, and that this power of responding and the mode of response must vary with the different individuals, as is the case with all other reflex systems in the body as well. This explains why some people are intensely religious, others moderately, others only slightly, and still others not at all, in the same way as some persons are very passionate, some moderately so, some only slightly and some so little that they seem to have no amorous feelings at all. In dealing with the evolutionary mechanism, as compared with the sexual process, we must remember the fact that, unlike the latter which has only the satisfaction of the procreative or erotic urge in view, the former expresses itself in the effort to find the solution to the mystery of existence and one's own being, the bedrock of religious inquiry, and the pursuit of knowledge to find the reasons for the natural phenomena urging one to raise oneself up to a position of power and well-being, the quest of the intellect. It is not therefore necessary that all people should be religious minded. In those engrossed completely in the acquisition of knowledge, to the exclusion of religion, the evolutionary impulse is also active.

In every case of genuine mystical experience and spiritual illumination, the brain is fed by the superior, highly potent *prana*, or life force, poured by *kundalini* into it through the spinal duct after extraction from every part of the body. It is obvious that unless there is superior mental activity or the emergence of a higher consciousness to cause the phenomena, the whole experience dwindles down to a hallucination. It is also manifest that for a regular supernormal activity of the brain, a more potent type of energy to serve as fuel for it would be necessary. This is supplied by *kundalini*. The process of transformation, needed to arrange a regulated supply of this energy in accordance with the metabolic resources of the body, is a most complex and delicate operation, which remains in progress from the time the practice becomes effective. The aspirants to Yoga who believe that they can force the gates of heaven open with this or that method do not realize the stupendous nature of the task that they undertake. Whatever the method used for gaining transcendent knowledge or even occult powers and whatever the intensity of the effort the final arbiter of the award is *kundalini*. It is for this reason that from time immemorial the serpent power has been worshiped instinctively in countless forms and in numerous guises by almost all the people of the earth. Even those who place no reliance on religion and no faith in God, considering intellect to be the sole guide and architect of human fate, also pay homage to *kundalini* indirectly, for without the constant seepage of the Elixir of Life into the brain through the *susumna*, as an indispensable factor in the process of evolution, human thought could never have attained the towering heights it occupies at present.

## 9

### **The Harvest: Transcendence, Genius, and Psychic Powers**

It has already been explained that *kundalini* is the spiritual as well as the biological base of all the phenomena connected with religion, the occult, and the supernatural. Whenever during the whole course of human history some man or woman exhibited uncanny powers which fell in the province of magic, witchcraft, augury, sorcery or mediumship and furnished conclusive evidence that the manifestations were genuine, in every case without exception, it signified the veiled activity of a slightly awake *kundalini*. In the same way, whenever any man or woman laid claim to prophethood, to direct communion with God or an Almighty Source of Intelligence and furnished irrefutable proof of suupernormal faculties, higher moral standards, and mystical insights, it also, in every case, indicated a fully active *kundalini* that found access to *sahasrara*, the highest centre in the brain. Just as all variations, perversions, and distortions observed in the sexual behaviour of individuals can only be attributed to the expression of the sex instinct, rooted in the reproductive mechanism, in the same way all the varied manifestations connected with religion and the supernatural have their origin in the dynamic spiritual power reservoir of *kundalini*.

In view of the fact that diverse conceptions about God, the

Soul, and the Beyond exist among people of different faiths, it is by no means an easy task to present the revolutionary ideas, embodied in this volume, so that they will coincide with the infinite mass of divergent and conflicting views held by the countless adherents of these various faiths. This task has become particularly difficult because of the fact that the existing literature on Yoga and *kundalini*, furnished by the modern popular treatises on the subject, presents a picture of both which often does not correspond to reality or the fundamental concept of Yoga as presented by the ancient adepts. Yoga and *kundalini* are interchangeable terms, for there is no Yoga and no union of the individual with Cosmic Consciousness unless *kundalini* is activated. The whole matter boils down to this: the human brain, as the result of evolution, has now the capacity to exhibit another kind of consciousness which can know itself or, in other words become conscious of consciousness, look beyond Space and Time. What is more surprising, instead of arriving at a conclusion by reasoning, as every normal mind does, it can dive into an Ocean of Knowledge in which all that is knowable is known, and all the problems awaiting solutions are solved. From this ocean droplets of fresh knowledge trickle down into normal consciousness, according to the degree of attunement with the brain, and it is these droplets of rare knowledge, not possible to recognize by empirical methods, which have always been honoured as Revelation.

From the accounts of the transcendent state of consciousness, left by the mystics and seers of both the East and West, it is evident that the purpose of every form of religious striving, including Yoga, is to acquire a new state of Being in which one possesses new faculties higher than reason and thought. From the very beginning of recorded history every individual who achieved this state of Being invariably found it extremely difficult, even impossible, to describe his experience in terms comprehensible to his contemporaries. Even the most eloquent had to resort to parable, paradox, and metaphor in order to express the

inexpressible experience. This difficulty still persists. From this it should not be inferred that we are expressing this difficulty as an avenue of escape from the responsibility of providing acceptable evidence for the objective nature of the phenomenon. What we are saying is that just as we cannot describe the taste of salt to anyone who has never tasted it, so it is impossible through verbal description to convey even a remote idea of the transcendent state to those who have never experienced it.

Inexpressibility has always been a persistent feature of mystical experience. "It is known to him," says the Kena Upanishad (ii.2), "to whom it is unknown. It is unknown to those who (think they) know It well, and Known to those who do not know." How the knower of *Brahman* expresses his own bewilderment at the experience is described in the verse preceding it: "I do not think I know (*Brahman*) well enough: Not that I do not know: I know and do not know as well. He amongst us who understands that utterance: 'Not that I do not know, I know and I do not know as well,' knows that (*Brahman*)." Those who are filled with an insatiable desire to have a vision of God or to have access to higher planes of consciousness are only motivated by promptings from the evolutionary centre in the brain to overstep the bounds of human consciousness. In the case of mystics and seers in the past, the transition was sometimes sudden. This was achieved by intense meditation, meditation, burning desire, and austerity, and the higher centre began to function abruptly causing, as it were, an explosion in consciousness, leaving the initiate shaken and breathless with the vision of a stupendous and entirely unexpected transformation within himself. It is no wonder the supramental, living Reality that now unfolded in the consciousness of the visionary was regarded as the Supreme Ruler, Creator, or the Author of the universe.

The most pressing need of our age is to widen the horizons of consciousness. This widening is necessary to counter-balance the staggering effect on the intellect caused by the present-day enormously increased knowledge of the universe, which

relegates the earth, the solar system, and even man, to a state of utter insignificance in a gigantic whole. This sense of irrelevance and isolation may not be so pronounced in the case of those who hold dominating positions in any sphere of human activity: in science, philosophy, art, industry, finance, politics, sports, and the like, but its effect on the more intelligent and more sensitive among the masses is often devastating. The explosive situation of the world today is the direct outcome of the outer and inner imbalance. The enormous increase in the number of drug addicts, the march of millions toward an unbridled, chaotic life in the fruitless effort to gain inner peace, the rush toward Yoga and other occult practices in order to experience the numinous, the constant scenes of disorder and destruction, violence, war, revolutions, and riots in an age when technology has brought formerly undreamed-of amenities within the grasp of every man, constitute a phenomenon about which no explanation in terms of current knowledge is possible. In actual fact, the real reason for this uncontrollable situation is that with the growing complexity and widening of the outer world a corresponding enlargement of the inner horizons is also necessary to save man from being completely crushed under the ponderous load of his own creation.

The development of mystical insight that grants to the overawed intellect a glimpse of the nature of the inner Self cannot, therefore, be considered either a luxury, a hobby, or a fancy with respect to those who pursue the goal, but as an unavoidable necessity for the survival of a sane and sober humanity. It is incredible that the evolutionary purpose served by the mystical impulse has not been recognized even by learned explanations, comparable to those which primitive minds offered for the mysterious phenomena of nature. The transporting effect of light and colour, of gems, of beautiful coloured glass, of superb painting, sculpture, and music becomes suspect since it is considered to be an aid to hallucinatory experience, to an excursion into "the mind's antipodes". On the contrary these objects serve

to remind the ego-consciousness of the marvellous transformation that is occurring in its depths, of the gradually developing wondrous state of Being which, when one looks inward, will appear lustrous as “an isle of gems,” glowing as a “mountain of burnished gold,” vast as the ocean, more alluring to the sense of sight, touch, hearing, taste, and smell than all the most enchanting works of art, music, and all the most delicious aromas, viands, and bodily sensations put together. On the wings of destiny every member of the human race is soaring inwardly toward a state of splendour, harmony, and peace that has no parallel in the universe we observe. The transporting effect of meditation on divine objects, of prayer, of magnificent places of worship, the solemn atmosphere in shrines, the touching life stories of prophets and saints, the profound utterances of sages and seers lie in their appeal to the evolutionary instinct which is drawing man toward a higher dimension of consciousness, toward a glorious inner universe in which all his uncorrupted ambitions, aspirations, and ideals will find fulfillment.

Can there be any doubt that these instances portray a condition of inner transformation. The ego-consciousness now in contact with the Universe of Life, with the Ocean of which it is but a droplet, feels one with It and yet overawed by the Majesty treats it as Something beyond and above it. Even in the normal state, the ultimate nature of the world we apprehend is something mysterious. It is a picture presented to us by our senses and the intellect. Every species of fish, reptile, bird, and animal perceives a different, though not a radically different, world. The mysterious senses of ants, bees, bats, dogs, migratory birds, and the like are incomprehensible to us because the world is presented to each in a different way so that certain things that are entirely beyond the realm of our cognition are a normal feature of their perception. We see and we know what we are permitted to see and know by our mind, which is conditioned by the capacity of the brain. Problems of life and death or the origin and the purpose of the universe do not torment the animal. Even in the human sphere

these problems have different values and different degrees of urgency for different people. What modern psychology fails to recognize is the fact that different people are at different levels of the evolutionary ascent, and that the human brain is still in a state of transition. So long as this cardinal fact is not accorded due recognition, no systematic study of mind is possible.

Problems of life and death, the here and the hereafter assume a greater urgency for those who are spiritually oriented. For some they become the most dominating influence in shaping the course of life. Those endowed with this type of thirst not infrequently change from one school of discipline to another and read avidly one book after another to discover a way to assuage this thirst without meeting any success. There is a strong reason for the disappointments often encountered by people of this class in their search. The thirst is the pointer to a certain target and the pole star guiding the mind toward a certain altered condition of consciousness in which the problem, never arising in the animal mind but tormentingly pursuing man at every step, finding a complete answer, then ceases to oppress. The problem arises in the human mind because the intellect is constituted in this way, and as long as it does not come across a mode of apprehension superior to its own it can never feel satisfied and never come to rest. With the enhancement of the intellect, unless there is degeneration, the problem becomes more pressing. This is actually what has happened in our time. Unless the knower in man overreaches the senses and the intellect and asserts its own importance and position of power in relation to the stupendous, mighty world the human mind can know no peace. This is the reason why those thirsty for knowledge of the Self are acutely conscious of disappointments and failures, for until the transition is complete and the intellect pacified with the vision, the mind continues to fret.

All that we are and all that we know are circumscribed by the capacity of the knower in us. The world appears gigantic and monstrous because we identify ourselves completely with the body and measure the vastness of the universe by its size. Viewed

apart from the body, unconditioned by the mind and intellect, the knower transcends the known, for the latter can never exceed the power of comprehension of the former and must always remain subservient to its capacity. The moment transcendence occurs, the objective universe loses its importance as well as its magnitude. This is what Jacob Boehme tries to express, coloured of course with ingrained theistic ideas, when he says: "In one quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at a University. For I saw and knew the being of all things, The Byss and the Abyss and the eternal generation the holy Trinity, the descent and origin of the world and of a creatures through the divine wisdom. I knew and saw in myself all the three worlds, the external and visible world of a pro-creation or external birth from both the internal and spiritual worlds; and I saw and knew the whole working essence, in evil and in good, and the origin of existence; and likewise how the fruitful bearing womb of eternity was brought forth. So that I did not only greatly wonder at it, but did also exceedingly rejoice, albeit I could very hardly apprehend the same in my external man and set it down with the pen. For I had a thorough view of the universe as in a chaos, wherein all things are couched and wrapt up, but it was impossible for me to explicate the same." \*

The same idea of transcendence is expressed in the Rig-Veda (x.90.1-3) in these words: ". . . He is the all-pervading Being manifesting himself as all things. He has innumerable heads, eyes and feet. It is He that has encompassed the whole universe and it is He again who transcends it. . . . "That Being is this whole cosmos, all that was and all that will be. He manifests Himself in the form of the universe. He is also the lord and giver of immortality. . . . So vast is His glory; but He, the universal Being, is greater than all that. The manifested world forms but a small portion of His being; in main He is unmanifest and

\**The Three Principle of the Divine Essence*, Jacob Boehme, K. W. Schiebler, Leipzig, 1922.

immortal.” Taittiriya Aranyaka (x.II) presents the same view thus: “He transcends the whole world, and also manifests Himself as the whole world. He is the eternal Being, the support of all, the remover of evil. The existence of the whole world depends on Him. He is the master of the world, the supreme Self, the eternal, the permanent good, the changeless, the Cosmic Being, the great goal of knowledge, the Self of the universe and the supreme refuge. . . .” The transformed consciousness, cognizant now of its infinite nature, immeasurably superior to the universe known by the senses, which continues to abide in its finite form, transcends and overshadows it, calming the unrest of the intellect convinced now beyond the least shadow of a doubt that the All-Pervading Knower and not the conditioned Known is the substratum of the universe.

Through divine dispensation, for some purpose which only the future can disclose, this frail, human creature, with a limited span of life, which some birds, fishes, and other lowly creatures exceed, with a body so delicate that even one blow at a vulnerable spot is sufficient to cause death, and a mind and memory so restricted that it cannot grasp more than an infinitesimal fraction of the cosmos, by the favour of Destiny with but a slight alteration in the vital energy feeding the brain, overcoming the limitations imposed by the senses, can soar to a state of Existence where the ruthless, colossal world becomes a fleeting shadow and he the Effulgent Sun. Death and fear then lose their hold, for what can harm the Ocean of Everlasting Life beyond the farthest reach of any profane material influence? It is in this sense of achieving a State of Consciousness, characterized by immortality and infinitude that it is said in the ancient works on Kundalini Yoga that the accomplished Sadhaka can create, preserve, and destroy the world at will. The underlying idea is that in the transcendent state which he attains with full lucidity, the world image which first dominated his unreal, sense-bound consciousness, recedes into insignificance.

Transcendence is as far removed from the hallucinatory states

of mind brought about by drugs, autohypnosis, autointoxication, and changes in body chemistry as the consciousness of absolute power and incomparable dignity in an anointed king, ruling over a vast empire, is removed from the delusive state of a psychotic who, disorderly and unkempt, raves at the top of his voice about his kingdom and his court. The general ignorance prevailing among the people, including even scholars, about the real nature of the beatific state is at the root of the present confusion, resulting in the waste of precious lives of those who fall prey to the delusion that drugs and other artificial methods can lead to the exalted state in which man for the first time steps over the rigid boundaries of mortal consciousness. It is not merely a change in the brilliance of colours of the objects seen, nor alteration or distortion in their shape, nor the revelation of a new significance in them, nor the transitory awareness of a new insight that is decisive in determining the genuineness of a mystical experience, but the change that occurs in the Fount of personality or, in other words, in the Knower, which is the distinguishing feature of the phenomenon. The Knower undergoes a complete metamorphosis; from a drop he becomes an ocean and from a point of awareness an infinite circle of sovereign consciousness.

Shankaracarya in Vivekacudamani (389 and 394) expresses the state of transcendence in these words: "The Self is within, and the Self is without, the Self is before and the Self is behind, the Self is in the south, and the Self is in the north; the Self likewise is above as below. . . . What is the use of dilating on this subject? The Jiva (embodied consciousness) is no other than *Brahman* (Universal Consciousness), this whole extended universe is *Brahman* Itself, the Shruti inculcates the *Brahman* without a Second, and it is an indubitable fact that people of enlightened minds who know their identity with *Brahman* and have given up their connection with the objective world, live palpably united with *Brahman* as Eternal Knowledge and Bliss." The Knower, surpassing now both the material universe and the world of thoughts or, in other words, merging in itself the process of knowing and

the known, assumes an aspect which no language can express and no intelligence grasp. "You cannot see the seer of sight," says the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* (3.4.2.). "You cannot hear the hearer of hearing, you cannot think the thinker of thought, you cannot know the knower of knowledge. This is your self that is within all. Everything besides this is perishable." The same idea of the incomprehensibility of the eternal, unconditioned Knower is again expressed in the same Upanishad (3.8.1) in these words: "He is never seen but is the Seer; He is never heard, but is the Hearer; He is never thought, but is the Thinker; He is never known, but is the Knower. There is no other seer than He, there is no other hearer than He, there is no other thinker than He, there is no other knower than He. He is the Inner Controller—your own self and immortal. All else but Him is perishable."

A radical transformation in the foundations of a man's personality, as comes to pass in the case of an accomplished Yogi, is actually a transformation in the nature of the Knower who is now in a position to perceive both the inner and the outer worlds. Such an alteration cannot occur without changing the whole mental structure of a man. This is exactly what this volume is intended to pinpoint and to prove. The fact that people in general are not properly educated about the real nature of the metamorphosis brought about by Yoga is at the root of the present-day flood of faulty literature on the subject from the pens of authors lacking completely in experience of the mystical state. This has done and is doing grave harm by disseminating wrong and sometimes even dangerous information about an undertaking requiring expert guidance and extreme care at every step. The other evil that has resulted from this ignorance is that false prophets and sham Gurus have sprung up and dominate the stage everywhere, especially in the West, reducing this venerable system of spiritual discipline to a farce, and in this way doing great disservice to a cause which in the present critical situation of the world is of paramount importance.

The ancient authors, especially those writing on Kundalini

Yoga, have made no secret of the divine attributes (*vibhutis*) and miraculous powers (*siddhis*) that automatically develop in one who attains perfection in Yoga. Patanjali, in his Yoga-Sutras, has devoted one full chapter of his book to the discussion of supernatural powers (*siddhis*). There is another aspect, even more important and fascinating, on which it is necessary to dwell here. If purely from the aspect of commonsense we soberly consider the idea of a metamorphosis of consciousness, involving a change from a human to a transhuman level, would it not be but rational to suppose that such a radical change in order to be genuine, and not merely an illusion, must be attended by other attributes of mind and intellect that are not found as a normal feature in human beings? It would be inaccurate to maintain that one who comes in contact with a Source of Infinite Intelligence in his ecstasies and visions would continue to have the same mental calibre afterward as he had before such an experience. His mental capacity and intellectual stature must show an enormous improvement and surpass in some respects, at least, the highest intellects of the time. It was primarily on account of the fact that in their power of expression and intellectual endowments the prophets and seers of the past towered head and shoulders over their contemporaries that they were able to win the respect and admiration of multitudes who accepted their teachings.

While the ancient masters have paid due attention to this aspect of Yoga and, in their writings, plainly brought out the fact that success in the enterprise is attended by remarkable increase in intellectual powers and by the development of literary talents and gifts, the modern authors have maintained an unaccountable silence over this important issue. Most of them have lavishly dwelt on the higher states of consciousness and miraculous powers but one notable achievement (the development of genius) has been, for some reason, completely ignored. One reason for this can be that they did not attach any importance to the repeated assertions made in the ancient works, treating them as mere euphemisms, and the other that the idea was so far from

their minds that they failed to grasp the significance of these assertions though, in the course of their study, they must have come across them repeatedly. The omission appears incredible considering the emphasis that the ancient authors have laid on this development. To the question of the present-day scholar, the development of enhanced intellectual powers and genius in one not endowed with them from birth is impossible because of the hereditary factors involved, depending on the nature of the genes. It is sufficient to say at this place that it is precisely in this aspect of Yoga that the possibility of objective demonstration lies in its most striking form.

It is evident (see also Appendix, pp. 204 to 207) that from Vedic times, persisting through the Upanishads, and coming down almost to our own day, there has always existed a strong belief that with the arousal of a normally dormant divine energy in him, a man of common clay can be transformed into an intellectual prodigy; an invincible giant in polemics, a most eloquent speaker and a poet whose "random talk even will take the form of poetry." Making every allowance for exaggeration, even if a fraction of the affirmations of ancient authors are accepted as correct, it discloses a tremendous possibility hidden in Yoga about which not only the masses but even the learned are entirely in the dark at present. There is every likelihood, considering the vein of extreme devotion and utter surrender to the divine *shakti* (*kundalini*) permeating the ancient treatises on the subject, particularly those in verse, that many of the authors themselves were the recipients of the favour and had witnessed the marvellous transformation in themselves. There is hardly any well-known Yoga saint in India who has not left a precious legacy of a priceless spiritual document in beautiful verse. To the seeker who practices Yoga to gain visionary experience or to develop psychic talents, this aspect of the discipline might not seem to be of any particular worth, but, considered from a pragmatic point of view, there is no side as useful for the enlighten-

ment of the seekers and as precious for a scientific exploration of the possibilities, latent in it, as this.

If mystical experience of the genuine kind, whether brought about by Yoga or any other form of religious discipline, represents a real unfolding of the spirit, or a vision of God, it must be attended by a blossoming of the mental fabric of the individual as well. If the blossoming does not occur and the mystic merely revels in his own enrapturing visions without possessing the ability to communicate his experiences in order to share them with the world, the whole achievement is reduced to the level of a fantasy or a daydream which, however pleasant it may be for the daydreamer, has no meaning or importance for others. Spiritual ideals and institutional religions possess a meaning and a value for mankind because the gifted individuals who popularized or founded them possessed in ample measure the talent to express their ideas and experiences in a manner that touched the heart and appealed to the intellect of their contemporaries. The idea common to the devout that their religion is revealed and God-ordained has a profound bearing on our present theme. That the scriptures have emanated from God, the Fountainhead of all knowledge and wisdom, conveys indirectly the highest tribute to the intellectual calibre of those who served as channels for the dissemination of the Revealed Teachings. From whatever aspect we examine it, the conclusion is irresistible that intellectual efflorescence is and should be an inseparable companion to spiritual enrichment.

The close connection between these two highest expressions of the human mind has, in its turn, a profound significance in relation to the present explosive situation of the world. Intellectual advancement must accompany spiritual growth. If the former occurs without a corresponding spiritual development it is a sign that the growth is one-sided and, therefore, abnormal, an indication that something is radically wrong with the society and a warning that danger lies ahead if the harmony is not restored. As spiritual perfection connotes the manifestation of a higher

human personality that has crossed beyond the limit, where common mortals come to a halt, it necessarily implies an all-round development in the mental capacity of the perfected person. It would be an anomaly if those who attain a lofty stature spiritually continue to be pygmies in intellect. The ancient authors, therefore, give expression to a very plain truth when they associate enhancement in intellectual acumen with spiritual perfection. While for the ancient this synchronous development of the two did not involve any factor antagonistic to the accepted ideas of the age, the present position is not as favourable for the modern intellectual. The transition from a state of mediocrity to a position of intellectual eminence in the light of the beliefs current in this age is for the average person an impossibility, and the concept that Yoga, or any other form of spiritual discipline, provides a sure way to its achievement is likely to be regarded with disbelief and even ridicule.

It is precisely because the idea is so unacceptable to the modern scholar, steeped in the materialistic trends of the time, that this aspect of Yoga has a profound significance for our age. That it is possible for one to blossom into a Samkara, a Michelangelo, a Hafiz, a Newton, Vyasa, a Plato, or an Einstein, with a certain kind of psycho-physiological discipline, is an idea so novel and so full of undreamed-of possibilities in this age of science that it outweighs all other present-day concepts by its importance and the promises it holds. Even if this possibility is admitted, there is little chance for any vast improvement of the world, since the phenomenon is so rare and the chances of a successful termination of the practice are so remote that the radical transformation wrought in the whole of mankind by a few scores of men of genius in this period of history is a sufficient guarantee that even a few transformed adepts in this or in any future age cannot but prove a most valuable asset to mankind. This is not all. There is every chance that once the possibility is empirically demonstrated and the law is established, the modern high degree of advance in the knowledge of psychology, therapy and physiology

would prove of inestimable value in improving the efficiency of the disciplines and minimizing the risks. The day is not distant, once the biological intricacies connected with the awakening of *kundalini* are known, when this divine enterprise will provide the most contested and most sought-after trophy for the luminaries of the time.

We live in an age of surprises. At the same time, we experience the horror of man-caused calamities. But no surprise has been so great as will take place when this law is empirically demonstrated, and no calamity has been so devastating as might befall if, in the present stage of technological development, the law is still ignored. The development of the human brain and the intellect is an unavoidable consequence of evolution, but without spiritual discipline and enlightenment the results can not only be unwholesome but also fatally poisonous. The scope of this volume does not permit us to dwell on the *kali* aspect of *kundalini*, the punitive phase when for the purpose of destruction, She, in a malignant form, is awake from birth in a demagogue or a dictator. The effort has been made here to bring into focus the vital issues involved in a study of *kundalini* and the imperative need for controlled genius in the present age. "With its roots above and branches below they speak of the eternal Asvattha tree," says the Bhagavad-Gita (xv.1). "Whose leaves are the Vedas; he who knows this is a knower of the Vedas." The Asvattha tree is the evolving phenomenal world. The impulse toward evolution comes from the root, that is, from the unmanifested Eternal Intelligence acting through cosmic *prana*, but for its correct translation and the proper adjustment of life, both individual and collective, to the needs of this impulse, knowledge of the Vedas, that is, both temporal and divine knowledge, is necessary. In other words, it is essential in order to ensure smooth progress and safety on the hazardous path of evolution that man should not only be possessed of temporal knowledge but should also know the laws that rule his spiritual growth. This is why *gayatri mantra* (the knowledge of *kundalini*) is said to be the quintessence of the Vedas.

How poor the current picture is of the lofty science of Yoga, especially in the West, can be observed from the fact that one dressing himself in a certain peculiar way, or one who can stand on his head for a few minutes, or one who, when he touches you, exhales a certain perfume, or one who sits calm and silent in a certain posture for prolonged spells is regarded as a Yogi. There is not the least inquiry as to the way by which such a person has transcended the normal mental state of an intelligent man. If there has been no such crossing of the boundary line, it means that Yoga has not been accomplished and, however learned or calm or self-controlled or physically healthy or agile a man might be, he is still as far from the consummation of Yoga as any other average individual. Even the awakening of *kundalini*, unattended by a metamorphosis of consciousness to the point of transcendence, does not make one aware of the supersensory realms. One in whom such an awakening occurs may display some psychic gifts, but in other respects he rises no higher than a common medium or sensitive. For real transformation or, in other words, for the fruition of Yoga one must be in rapport with higher planes of existence and have access to Supernal Wisdom which flows from the truly enlightened even as fragrance exudes from a blooming rose.

The picture of the accomplished Yogi, presented by the ancient authors, though exaggerated and distorted here and there, has a solid core of truth so alluring and so precious, for both the individual and the race, that no other human undertaking is comparable to it. The moment transcendence occurs, the aspirant blossoms into a genius of a high order. Simultaneously other windows in the mind open and, to his unbounded surprise and joy, he finds himself in possession of channels of communication which, acting independently of the senses, can bring to him knowledge of events, occurring at a distance, as also visions of the past and future. His utterances may become prophetic (*vaksiddhi*) and he may acquire the healing touch.

The one important lesson, especially relevant to this age, which Yoga imparts is that the stupendous universe we live in is but a

compartment in a mammoth edifice of which the other compartments are not perceptible to our senses. The other numerous compartments might be as vast or even vaster than the one discernible to us to the farthest limits of space, and they all might be interpenetrating or overlapping each other without the inhabitants of one being aware of the proximity of the other. Just as some pictures show the face of one person from one side and that of another from the other, and of a third when viewed from the front, in the same way the universe, perceptible to our senses might be multifaced, that is, might have innumerable facets, presenting as it were a different form to each separate level of consciousness, appearing as an objective reality to a normal human mind and as a vanished dream to one in *turiya*. It is also possible that there might be innumerable other forms of life on different planes of consciousness, operating with different types of sensitive equipment. In the culminating state of Yoga we merely shift from one plane of consciousness to another.

When this happens the world normally visible to us loses its grip on the mind. It is in this sense that the Upanishads compare it to a dream or to a rope imagined to be a snake or a mirage mistaken for an oasis. The actual fact is that the world is not a myth or a pure illusion, but though real in one dimension of consciousness, becomes a shadow or vanishes altogether in the other. The classification of human consciousness into three states of waking, dream, and dreamless slumber, made by the ancient seers of India is to bring into relief the fourth state, *turiya*, which includes in it all the three states and yet is above and beyond them, or, in other words, which represents another dimension of consciousness in which the material world loses its objectivity for the Yogi, now in direct contact with other planes of Being. This is how Sankaracarya expresses these variations in consciousness in the beginning of his commentary on the Mandukya Upanishad: "I bow to that *Brahman*, which, after having enjoyed (during the waking state) all gross objects by pervading the entire universe with the omnipresent rays of Its immutable Conscious-

ness, embracing the entire variety of movable and immovable objects; which, again, after having digested, as it were—that is to say, experienced within (in the dream state)—all the variety of objects produced by desires and brought into existence by the mind, enjoys bliss in deep sleep and makes us experience that bliss through *maya*; which further is designated in terms of *maya* as the fourth (*turiya*), and which is supreme, immortal and changeless.”

Entrance into *turiya* is entrance into a dimension of consciousness, above the normal human level. This does not make the world, perceptible at the human level, unreal or illusory in the least. To say so would be to deny the reality of *turiya* also, for it is only when viewed from the human aspect that the significance of *turiya* can be understood. If there were no human level of consciousness there would be no *turiya* either. As such it is fallacious to hold that for one who has attained the knowledge of *Brahman* in *turiya*, the world should cease to hold any value or importance. In actual fact, a contrary view would be more sensible and accurate. As it is in the world that our bodies and minds are nourished and, again, as it is because of the world that the higher state of consciousness, experienced in *samadhi* or *turiya*, is attained, it naturally devolves as a duty on one who has tasted the Supreme Bliss of this indescribable state to exert himself to the utmost to help others to reach the same summit in order to repay the debt he owes to the world and to the countless people of the world whose labour, directly or indirectly, contributed in innumerable ways to his existence, maintenance and, finally, to the achievement that brought him such glory and joy. In a law-bound Creation it is obvious that this higher plane of consciousness cannot be a prize, reserved for a few; but what we have failed to recognize so far, is that it must be a summit which every member of the race is destined to reach one day. Those who climb to it first, acting as pioneers, must guide others on the steep ascent until the task is accomplished, and the whole caravan arrives safely at the top.

There was a day when the earth was considered to be the centre of the universe, around which the sun, the moon, and the stars obediently revolved. Further investigation has revealed an altogether different picture of the cosmos and, far from being the centre of creation, the earth, it has now been established, holds a very insignificant position in a gigantic host. Is it not reasonable to suppose that what applies to the outer universe might be true of the inner one also and that the conception that *turiya* is the highest state of existence and the last summit of consciousness might be as illusory as was the notion that the earth is the primary centre of all existence? This faulty conception might have been based on the equally erroneous idea that man is the cream of all creation, a clearcut symptom of arrogance and self-conceit, similar to that which led ancient kings to claim a divine origin for themselves. To hold that attainment to superconsciousness entitles one to claim identity with the Creator or *Brahman* is tantamount to bringing the Almighty First Cause down to the level of puny man or raising this frail creature to the stature of the All-powerful Ruler of the cosmos, both unmistakable symptoms of self-adulation and pride. We have not yet been able to establish, to the satisfaction of all sections of humanity, the reality of transcendent states of consciousness, and the accounts of those who claim to have attained it are so varied and divergent that it is not surprising that doubts are raised about the validity of the whole phenomenon in the minds of many people. To dismiss these genuine doubts as mere delusion is not reasonable on the part of those who believe in its reality and, if such an attitude is adopted by one who has attained Transcendence, it reveals the continued existence in his enlightened mind of that most stubborn of human frailties: pride.

“In the same way as the unwise act with attachment,” says the Bhagavad-Gita (3.25 and 26), “so should the wise act without attachment for the guidance of the world . . . (and) let not the wise unsettle the understanding of the ignorant, attached to action, but acting himself with equipoise should engage them in

action also.” In the present state of our knowledge when Transcendence is still an unverified and disputed phenomenon, and the territory is still as foreign to the normal mind as the landscape of an unseen planet, would it not be presumptuous on the part of one who has entered a higher plane of consciousness to jump to conclusions about the Ultimate, when he himself has not made sure that he has touched the peak of human evolution and that there is no other summit higher than the one he has reached? There can be no more potent factor to humble a man of intelligence and to deflate his pride than the contemplation of the starry firmament at night and the realization of his own utterly insignificant position in the innumerable host of colossal suns which he perceives. Similarly, there is no more potent factor to humble the pride of an Awakened man than the infinitely vaster dimensions of the universe of consciousness he glimpses within. The most sensible thing for both the intellectual and the man of vision, in the present state of our knowledge, is to exchange ideas in order to identify the basic factors underlying all genuine spiritual experience and then to devise methods to establish the validity of the phenomenon beyond doubt and dispute.

The investigation has to be undertaken in all humility because, in approaching the supersensible, man for the first time comes in conscious contact with Intelligent Forces that are not amenable to mortal control. What those engaged in this investigation must always keep before their minds is the indisputable fact that their very existence, about which they know almost nothing, depends entirely on the benign disposition of these Intelligent Forces. When benignly disposed *kundalini* can transform a commonplace, humble man into a seer, a prophet, an intellectual giant, or a world teacher, with extraordinary talents and supernormal gifts, but approached arrogantly or with impure motives, the same Energy, malignantly disposed, can change the most clever man into a gibbering maniac in such a dreadful state of self-torture that death would be merciful in comparison. During the last approximately one hundred years, in spite of repeated

attempts made by competent investigators, including prominent men of science, to place supernormal phenomena on a scientific footing, the success achieved has been almost negligible and the world is still torn by doubts about this momentous issue, close to the heart of every human being. The reason for it lies in the fact that approach to Divinity for enlightenment has to be made in a different spirit and in a way other than that adopted for the investigation of physical phenomena. The sphere of the spirit has been carefully shielded by nature from the prying eyes of the curious, and only those few who pass the scrutiny of the Cosmic Forces that guard access to the Higher Planes of Consciousness, are allowed to pass through. These screening devices are present in the human brain, and are acted upon by the cosmic *prana* in the same way as it acts on the genes. It is because access to the spiritual kingdom is so closely guarded that the investigation of psychic phenomena, carried on for the past several decades, has not been decisive in solving the riddle or even in furnishing conclusive evidence this way or that. The believers continue to believe, but the skeptics are still unconvinced about the independent and deathless nature of the spirit.

In their intellectual stature, the leading thinkers of the race have almost touched the threshold of the divine, but, for access, a high degree of perfection in all the three components of personality, mental, moral, and physical, is necessary before the doors will swing open. In support of our assertion it is enough to point out that in every system of Yoga development of all three aspects of personality is invariably kept in view. "The Self is not attained by one devoid of strength," says the Mundaka Upanishad (3.2.4), "nor through delusion, nor through austerity devoid of system; but the Self of that Knower, who strives through these means enters into the abode that is *Brahman*." The mighty problem of life and death is the bait, dangled tantalizingly by nature before the human mind, to draw man toward a higher state of consciousness. Those whose minds treat this problem as the first priority are the ones who accept Yoga or other forms of spiritual discipline

or who embrace monastic ways of life. The intellectual ferment caused by the problems of existence and the spiritual fervour caused by the mystery of creation and the riddle of our own being owe their origin to one and the same source, *kundalini*. Taking into account the fact that both spiritual knowledge and high intellectual acumen develop with perfection in Yoga and the arousal of *kundalini*, it becomes obvious that all those men and women who are born spiritually more advanced or intellectually more brilliant must have a proportionately active *kundalini*, pumping a tiny stream of Her potent *prana* into the brain, from the very conception, leading to the development of a superior organ of thought, with a higher florescence of this or that faculty.

If we agree that intellectual superiority must accompany spiritual illumination, as the two have invariably been found in conjunction with each other in all the great seers and prophets of the past, we must also take it for granted that those who display intellectual pre-eminence in any sphere, not even excluding skepticism, must be very close to spiritual enlightenment. The evolutionary process, carrying mankind toward a higher state of consciousness, it is plain, cannot make a distinction between this man and that, and the law must operate uniformly. 'Where discordance or disproportion occurs in the development, the reason must lie in heredity, defective mode of life in putting excessive emphasis on one of the two aspects, or in some fault in the organism or environment. Considered from this aspect, it is safe to infer that the unmistakable intellectual advance in this age could not occur in isolation, without a corresponding spiritual development, and the reason why this has not come to pass in the majority of people must rest on some factor or factors responsible for the disproportionate growth of the two. It is also safe to infer that among the top-rank intellects there must be many trembling on the verge of mystical experience which, because of an adverse environment or a faulty mode of life, never materializes. Also there must be millions upon millions of men and women in other ranks in whom developing spirituality finds

expression in the hunger for mystical experience, preoccupation with the supernatural, the search for adepts to show the way, burning interest in Yoga, spiritualism, astrology, psychical phenomena, palmistry, alchemy, and the like. There must also be millions in whom the inexorable upsurge of spiritual tendencies, denied a healthy expression due to a combination of disharmonious factors, finds vent in hysterical, neurotic, or even psychotic conditions of the mind.

*Kundalini*, by its very nature as the evolutionary instinct and power mechanism in man, implanted with a divine purpose, covers all the varied facets of human life. In the present critical situation of the world there is no other branch of study so illuminating as this to determine the direction of human evolution and the meaning and purpose of human life. What first psychical research and now parapsychology have so far failed to ascertain can be determined with ease, correct to the last detail, with the arousal of *kundalini*. We have not yet dwelt on the promises and potentialities for the edification and exaltation of man pregnant in Her. Transcendence, genius and psychic gifts comprise only a section of the inventory of incomparable benefits obtainable through Her Grace. Prolongation of life, vibrant health, preservation of youthful vigour of the body and mind to the end of a long life, erotic radiation, personal magnetism, command over Eros, and the like, about which the ancient masters have written time and again, are the other coveted prizes attainable through *kundalini*. They all are a part and parcel of the evolutionary perfection toward which, at an exceedingly slow rate of progress, man nevertheless is inexorably being drawn. *Kundalini* bestows both Yoga (union with the Divine) and Bhoga (enjoyment). But not the unwholesome enjoyment of a libertine nor the morbid sensuous delight of a hedonist, nor the unholy pleasure of one thirsty for power, nor the hectic acquisition of one hungry for wealth, but the incomparable Bliss that wells up from the Fount of Eternal Life within, invulnerable and perennial, and the happiness that comes from an honourable, well-spent, and consecrated life, de-

voted to noble pursuits, partaking with great moderation and in a most judicious manner of all the ecstasies and joys of life provided by heaven for the delectation of man.

It has to be borne in mind that the evolutionary impulse is carrying mankind toward a more glorious, more sublime, and more happy life with all the attributes of mind, all healthy desires and passions necessary for his survival both in his present state and in the destined Higher Order toward which he is bound. The superman of the future will live, thrive and beget, almost as we do, with this difference—that all his actions and desires, obeying an indomitable will, will naturally be well considered, balanced, and chaste. He will have learned how to build a peaceful Eden, free from every trace of violence, war, want, and disease, with a far more harmonious and equalitarian social order, to permit every individual to live undisturbed in the blissful paradise within himself. *Kundalini* is the Divine Power, both individually and collectively, which as the controller of evolution, raising man from the position of a speck of protoplasm, is slowly moulding him into a Man-god, amid all the uproar and unrest that characterizes our age, in order to endow him with inner attributes and to crown him with a glory in the millennia to come which are beyond our loftiest dreams.

## Appendix

In the Sat-Cakra-Nirupan, embodied by Arthur Avalon in “The Serpent Power,” there are in all 55 verses out of which no less than ten in clear, unequivocal terms refer to the development of surpassing intellectual powers and literary talents in the Yogi who successfully awakens Kundalini. As this issue is of utmost importance, nine of these verses are reproduced here:

Verse 3. “She is beautiful like a chain of lightning and fine like a (lotus) fibre, and shines in the minds of the sages. She is extremely subtle; *the awakener of pure knowledge*; the embodiment of all bliss, whose true nature is pure Consciousness. The Brahma-dvara shines in her mouth. This place is the entrance to the region sprinkled by ambrosia, and is called the Knot, as also the mouth of Susumna.” Verse 7. “Here dwells the Devi Dakini by name; her four arms shine with beauty, and her eyes are brilliant red. She is resplendent like the lustre of many suns rising at one and the same time. *She is the carrier of the revelation of the ever-pure intelligence.*” Verses 10 and 11. “Over it shines the sleeping Kundalini, fine as the fibre of lotus-stalk. She is the world-bewilderer, gently covering the mouth of Brahmna-dvara by Her own. Like the spiral of the conch-shell, Her shining snake-like form goes three and a half times round Siva, and Her lustre is as that of a strong flash of young strong lightning. Her sweet murmur is like the indistinct hum of swarms of love-mad bees. *She produces melodious poetry and Bandha and all other compositions in prose or verse in sequence or otherwise in Samskṛta, Prakṛta and other languages.* It is She who maintains all the beings of the world by means of inspiration

and expiration, and shines in the cavity of the root (Mula) Lotus like a chain of brilliant lights." Verse 13. "By meditating thus on Her who shines within the Mula-Cakra, with the lustre of ten millions Suns, *a man becomes Lord of speech and king among men, and an Adept in all kinds of learning.* He becomes ever free from all diseases, and his inmost Spirit becomes full of great gladness. Pure of disposition *by his deep and musical words, he serves the foremost of the Devas.*"

Verse 18. "He who meditates upon this stainless Lotus, which is named Svadhisthana, is freed immediately from all his enemies, such as the fault of Ahamkara and so forth. He becomes a Lord among Yogis, *and is like the Sun illumining the dense darkness of ignorance. The wealth of his nectar-like words flows in prose and verse in well-reasoned discourse.*" Verse 21. "Here abides Lakini, the benefactress of all. She is four armed, of radiant body, is dark (of complexion), clothed in yellow raiment and decked with various ornaments, and exalted with the drinking of ambrosia. By meditating on this Navel Lotus the power to destroy and create (the world) is acquired. *Vani (goddess of speech) with all the wealth of knowledge ever abides in the lotus of His face.*" Verse 27. "Foremost among Yogis, he ever is dearer than the dearest to women. *He is pre-eminently wise and full of noble deeds.* His senses are completely under control. His mind in its intense concentration is engrossed in thoughts of the Brahman. *His inspired speech flows like a stream of (clear) water.* He is like the Devata who is the beloved of Laksmi and he is able at will to enter another's body." Verse 31. "He who has attained complete knowledge of the Atma (Brahman) *becomes by constantly concentrating his mind (Citta) on this Lotus a great Sage, eloquent and wise,* and enjoys uninterrupted peace of mind. He sees the three periods, and becomes the benefactor of all, free from disease and sorrow and long-lived, and, like Hamsa, the destroyer of endless dangers."

From immemorial times Revelation and inspiration have always been associated with spiritual perfection. The ancient writers on Kundalini provide us with a very valuable clue when they associate inspiration, enhanced intellectual acumen and literary talents with a successful awakening of the Serpent-Power. In view of the fact that Revelation has been a prerogative of the illuminati from very ancient times, the conclusion becomes irresistible that in all such cases the cause behind this extraordinary fruition was Kundalini. If this possibility is admitted, and there is no other rational explanation for the phenomenon, other than special favour of God, which is unacceptable, it provides a strong reason for the acceptance of the other possibilities ascribed to this

Divine Power, if not in their entirety, at least to certain reasonable extent.

Gayatri, the essence of the Vedas, is Kundalini. The three strands of the sacred thread (Gayatri) worn by the Hindus, represent the three channels of nerve-energy, Ida, Pingala and Susumna, and the knot, known as Brahma-Granthi, is the difficult-to-pierce knot that blocks the passage of Kundalini at the entrance to the Ajna Cakra. It is after this knot is penetrated that surprising changes occur in the mental condition of the Sadhaka. Gayatri (Kundalini) is Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning and also Vagesvari, the Isvari of speech. In Atharva Veda (19. 71. 1) Gayatri is said to be the bestower of longevity, Prana, strength, fame, wealth and Brahma knowledge. "One who knows Gayatri becomes proficient in all knowledge," says Yogi Yajnavalkya. "Just as honey is the extract of flowers and butter the extract of milk," says Vyasa, "in the same way Gayatri is the essence of all the Vedas. Perfection in Gayatri is like Kamadhenu (the cow of Indra which fulfils every wish)." It is obvious that the virtues attributed to Her in the Vedas and the Upanishads, the Puranas and the Epics are the same as are ascribed to Kundalini in the Tantras and other books.

The ancient work, Pancastavi, refers to this bloom in the mental faculties of a Sadhaka in several remarkable passages. We quote only one of them: "O Saraswati (Kundalini as the Goddess of learning)," it says (1.8), "Verily there pours out from the lotus mouths of those devotees who contemplate thy entrancing resplendence, spotless like unto a heap of white lotuses, irradiating the brain and dwelling in the forehead, akin to a stream of ambrosia, an uninterrupted flow of words, clear and full of deep meaning, like the simmering, wavy lustre of the milky way."

Ananda-Lahari (Wave of Bliss), ascribed to the renowned philosopher, Sankaracarya, which is one of the most magnificent hymns addressed to Divine Sakti, consists of 41 verses out of which no less than six in clear words refer to Kundalini as the bestower of knowledge, intellectual, pre-eminence and literary talent. What is of particular interest is the fact that Ananda-Lahari, or the whole work, Saundarya-Lahari, of which it is a part, is said to be based on the personal experience of its great author, and his great Guru, Gaudpadacarya. Sankara is said to have worked Kundalini to Sahasrara himself. He was an intellectual prodigy, a literary genius and one of the greatest spiritual luminaries India has ever produced. "Thou art the sun which illumines the inner darkness of the ignorant. Thou art the channel running with the honey of Consciousness for the unknowing" says Ananda-Lahri in verse 3.

Karpuradi-Stotra (Hymn to Kali) contains only 22 verses out of which as many as 8 dwell on this aspect of Kundalini.

The enterprise of Yoga is not aimed merely to procure peace of mind for the aspirants or merely vision of God and psychic gifts, but it is designed to raise one to the lofty stature of an intellectual prodigy, blessed with Vaikhari, that is spontaneous flow of words whether in poesy or prose full of wisdom and worth. Dispassionately considered, can psychic gifts and miraculous powers bear comparison with genius? Do we need a greater testimony to prove the incalculable worth of properly directed intellect than the amazing transformation that has occurred in the world? In our time can there be any other branch of knowledge as deserving of serious attention as that which can show the way to the cultivation of this one of the most precious ornaments of the human mind? So strong is the force of habit, however, that even after knowing of this possibility, with all the authentic material that has been cited in its support, even the erudite and the intelligent may be assailed by doubts and refuse to believe until the truth of this great discovery of the ancient Indian savants is empirically demonstrated.

# **THE SHADOW OF** **THE DALAI LAMA**

**Sexuality, Magic and  
Politics in Tibetan  
Buddhism**

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# INTRODUCTION

## Light and Shadow

The practice and philosophy of Buddhism has spread so rapidly throughout the Western world in the past 30 years and has so often been a topic in the media that by now anybody who is interested in cultural affairs has formed some sort of concept of Buddhism. In the conventional “Western” notion of Buddhism, the teachings of Buddha Gautama are regarded as a positive Eastern countermodel to the decadent civilization and culture of the West: where the Western world has introduced war and exploitation into world history, Buddhism stands for peace and freedom; whilst Western rationalism is destructive of life and the environment, the Eastern teachings of wisdom preserve and safeguard them. The meditation, compassion, composure, understanding, nonviolence, modesty, and spirituality of Asia stand in contrast to the actionism, egomania, unrest, indoctrination, violence, arrogance, and materialism of Europe and North America. *Ex oriente lux*—“light comes from the East”; *in occidente nox*—“darkness prevails in the West”.

We regard this juxtaposition of the Eastern and Western hemispheres as not just the “business” of naive believers and zealous Tibetan lamas. On the contrary, this comparison of values has become distributed among Western intelligentsia as a popular philosophical speculation in which they flirt with their own demise.

But the cream of Hollywood also gladly and openly confess their allegiance to the teachings of Buddhism (or what they understand these to be), especially when these come from the mouths of Tibetan lamas. “Tibet is looming larger than ever on the show business map,” the *Herald Tribune* wrote in 1997. “Tibet is going to enter the Western popular culture as something can only when Hollywood does the entertainment injection into the world system. Let’s remember that Hollywood is the most powerful force in the world, besides the US military” (*Herald Tribune*, March 20, 1997, pp. 1, 6). Orville Schell, who is working on a book on *Tibet and the West*, sees the Dalai Lama’s “Hollywood connection” as a substitute for the non-existent diplomatic corps that could represent the interests of the exiled Tibetan hierarchy: “Since he [the Dalai Lama] doesn’t have embassies, and he has no political power, he has to seek other kinds. Hollywood is a kind of country in his own, and he’s established a kind of embassy there.” (*Newsweek*, May 19, 1997, p. 24).

In Buddhism more and more show-business celebrities believe they have discovered a message of salvation that can at last bring the world peace and tranquility. In connection with his most recent film about the young Dalai Lama (*Kundun*), the director Martin Scorsese, more known for the violence of his films, emotionally declared: "Violence is not the answer, it doesn't work any more. We are at the end of the worst century in which the greatest atrocities in the history of the world have occurred ... The nature of human beings must change. We must cultivate love and compassion" (*Focus* 46/1997, p. 168; retranslation). The karate hero Steven Segal, who believes himself to be the reincarnation of a Tibetan lama, tells us, "I have been a Buddhist for twenty years and since then have lived in harmony with myself and the world" (*Bunte*, November 6, 1997, p. 24; retranslation). For actor Richard Gere, one of the closest Western confidants of the Dalai Lama, the "fine irony of Buddhism, which signifies the only way to true happiness, is our own pleasure to offer to each and all" (*Bunte*, November 6, 1997, p. 25; retranslation). Helmut Thoma, former head of the private German television company RTL, is no less positive about this Eastern religion: "Buddhists treat each other in a friendly, well-meaning and compassionate way. They see no difference between their own suffering and that of others. I admire that" (*Bunte*, November 6, 1997, p. 24). Actress Christine Kaufmann has also enthused, "In Buddhism the maxim is: enjoy the phases of happiness for these are transitory" (*Bunte*, November 6, 1997, p. 21). Sharon Stone, Uma Thurman, Tina Turner, Patty Smith, Meg Ryan, Doris Dörrie, and Shirley MacLaine are just some of the film stars and singers who follow the teachings of Buddha Gautama.

The press is no less euphoric. The German magazine *Bunte* has praised the teachings from the East as the "ideal religion of our day": Buddhism has no moral teachings, enjoins us to happiness, supports winners, has in contrast to other religions an unblemished past ("no skeletons in the closet"), worships nature as a cathedral, makes women beautiful, promotes sensuousness, promises eternal youth, creates paradise on earth, reduces stress and body weight (*Bunte*, November 6, 1997, pp. 20ff.).

What has already become the myth of the "Buddhization of the West" is the work of many. Monks, scholars, enthusiastic followers, generous sponsors, occultists, hippies, and all sorts of "Eastern trippers" have worked on it. But towering above them all, just as the Himalayas surpass all other peaks on the planet, is His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Timeless, gigantic, respectful, tolerant, patient, modest, simple, full of humor, warm, gentle, lithe, earthy, harmonious, transparent, pure, and always smiling and laughing — this is how the *Kundun* (the Tibetan word means "presence" or "living Buddha") is now known to all. There is no positive human characteristic which has not at one time or another been applied to the Dalai Lama. For many of the planet's inhabitants, even if they are non-Buddhists, he represents the most respectable living individual of our epoch.

Many believe they have discovered in the straightforward personality of this Buddhist monk all the rare qualities of a gracious and trustworthy character that we seek in vain among our Western politicians and church leaders. In a world full of evil, materialism, and corruption he represents goodwill, the realm of the spirit, and the lotus blossom of purity; amidst the maelstrom of trivialities and confusion he stands for meaning, calm, and stability; in the competitive struggle of modern capitalism and in an age where reports of catastrophes are constant he is the guarantor of justice

and a clear and unshaken will; from the thick of the battle of cultures and peoples he emerges as the apostle of peace; amidst a global outbreak of religious fanaticism he preaches tolerance and nonviolence.

His followers worship him as a deity, a “living Buddha” (*Kundun*), and call him their “divine king”. Not even the Catholic popes or medieval emperors ever claimed such a high spiritual position — they continued to bow down before the “Lord of Lords” (God) as his supreme servants. The Dalai Lama, however —according to Tibetan doctrine at least — himself appears and acts as the “Highest”. In him is revealed the mystic figure of ADI BUDDHA (the Supreme Buddha); he is a religious ideal in flesh and blood. In some circles, enormous hopes are placed in the *Kundun* as the new Redeemer himself. Not just Tibetans and Mongolians, many Taiwan Chinese and Westerners also see him as a latterday Messiah. [1]

However *human* the monk from Dharamsala (India) may appear, his person is surrounded by the most occult speculations. Many who have met him believe they have encountered the supernatural. In the case of the “divine king” who has descended to mankind from the roof of the world, that which was denied Moses—namely, to glimpse the countenance of God (*Yahweh*)—has become possible for pious Buddhists; and unlike Yahweh this countenance shows no wrath, but smiles graciously and warmly instead.

The *esoteric* pathos in the characterization of the Dalai Lama has long since transcended the boundaries of Buddhist insider groups. It is the famous show business personalities and even articles in the “respectable” Western press who now express the mystic flair of the *Kundun* in weighty exclamations: “The fascination is the search for the third eye”, Melissa Mathison, scriptwriter for Martin Scorsese’s film, *Kundun*, writes in the *Herald Tribune*. “Americans are hoping for some sort of magical door into the mystical, thinking that there’s some mysterious reason for things, a cosmic explanation. Tibet offers the most extravagant expression of the mystical, and when people meet His Holiness, you can see on their faces that they’re hoping to get this hit that will transcend their lives, take them someplace else” (*Herald Tribune*, March 20, 1997).

Nevertheless — and this is another magical fairytale — the divine king’s omnipotent role combines well with the monastic modesty and simplicity he exhibits. It is precisely this fascinating combination of the supreme (“divine king”) and the almighty with the lowliest (“mendicant”) and weakest that makes the Dalai Lama so appealing for many — clear, understandable words, a gracious smile, a simple robe, plain sandals, and behind all this the omnipotence of the divine. With his constantly repeated statement — “I ... see myself first as a man and a Tibetan who has made the decision to become a Buddhist monk” — His Holiness has conquered the hearts of the West (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 7). We can believe in such a person, we can find refuge in him, from him we learn about the wisdom of life and death. [2]

A similar reverse effect is found in another of the *Kundun's* favorite sayings, that the institution of the Dalai Lama could become superfluous in the future. "Perhaps it would really be good if I were the last!" (Levenson, 1990, p. 366). Such admissions of his own superfluity bring tears to people's eyes and are only surpassed by the prognosis of the "divine king" that in his next life he will probably be reincarnated as an insect in order to help this lower form of life as an "insect messiah". In the wake of such heartrending prophecies no-one would wish for anything more than that the institution of the Dalai Lama might last for ever.

The political impotence of the country the hierarch had to flee has a similarly powerful and disturbing effect. The image of the innocent, peaceful, spiritual, defenseless, and tiny Tibet, suppressed and humiliated by the merciless, inhumane, and materialistic Chinese giant has elevated the "Land of Snows" and its monastic king to the status of a worldwide symbol of "pacifist resistance". The more Tibet and its "ecclesiastical king" are threatened, the more his spiritual authority increases and the more the Kundun becomes an international moral authority. He has succeeded in the impossible task of drawing strength from his weakness.

The numerous speeches of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, his interviews, statements, writings, biographies, books, and his countless introductions and forewords to the texts of others deal almost exclusively with topics like compassion, kindness, sincerity, love, nonviolence, human rights, ecological visions, professions of democracy, religious tolerance, inner and outer spirituality, the blessings of science, world peace, and so on. It would take a true villain to not agree totally with what he has said and written. Training consciousness, achieving spiritual peace, cultivating inner contentment, fostering satisfaction, practicing awareness, eliminating egoism, helping others — what responsible person could fail to identify with this? Who doesn't long for flawless love, clear intellect, generosity, and enlightenment?

Within Western civilization, the Dalai Lama appears as the purest light. He represents — according to former President Jimmy Carter — a new type of world leader, who has placed the principles of peace and compassion at the center of his politics, and who, with his kind and winning nature, has shown us all how the hardest blows of fate can be borne with perseverance and patience. By now he symbolizes human dignity and global responsibility for millions. Up until very recently hardly anyone, with the exception of his archenemies, the Chinese communists, has dared to criticize this impotent/omnipotent luminary. But then, out of the blue in 1996, dark clouds began to gather over the bright aura of the "living Buddha".

Charges, accusations, suspicions and incriminations began to appear in the media. At first on the Internet, then in isolated press reports, and finally in television programs (see *Panorama* on ARD [Germany], November 20, 1997 and *10 vor 10* on SF1 [Switzerland], January 5-8, 1998). At the same time as the Hollywood stars were erecting a media altar for their Tibetan god, the public attacks on the Dalai Lama were becoming more frequent. Even for a mundane politician the catalogue of accusations would have been embarrassing, but for a divine king they were

horrendous. And on this occasion the attacks came not from the Chinese camp but from within his own ranks.

The following serious charges are leveled in an open letter to the *Kundun* supposedly written by Tibetans in exile which criticizes the “despotism” of the hierarch: “The cause [of the despotism] is the invisible disease which is still there and which develops immediately if met with various conditions. And what is this disease? It is your clinging to your own power. It is a fact that even at that time if someone would have used democracy on you, you would not have been able to accept it. ... Your Holiness, you wish to be a great leader, but you do not know that in order to fulfill the wish, a ‘political Bodhisattva vow’ is required. So you entered instead the wrong ‘political path of accumulation’ (*tsog lam*) and that has lead you on a continuously wrong path. You believed that in order to be a greater leader you had to secure your own position first of all, and whenever any opposition against you arose you had to defend yourself, and this has become contagious. ... Moreover, to challenge lamas you have used religion for your own aim. To that purpose you had to develop the Tibetan people’s blind faith. ... For instance, you started the politics of public Kalachakra initiations. [3] Normally the Kalachakra initiation is not given in public. Then you started to use it continuously in a big way for your politics. The result is that now the Tibetan people have returned to exactly the same muddy and dirty mixing of politics and religion of lamas which you yourself had so precisely criticized in earlier times. ... You have made the Tibetans into donkeys. You can force them to go here and there as you like. In your words you always say that you want to be Ghandi but in your action you are like a religious fundamentalist who uses religious faith for political purposes. Your image is the Dalai Lama, your mouth is Mahatma Ghandi and your heart is like that of a religious dictator. You are a deceiver and it is very sad that on the top of the suffering that they already have the Tibetan people have a leader like you. Tibetans have become fanatics. They say that the Dalai Lama is more important than the principle of Tibet. ... Please, if you feel like being like Gandhi, do not turn the Tibetan situation in the church dominated style of 17th century Europe” (Sam, May 27, 1997 - Newsgroup 16).

The list of accusations goes on and on. Here we present some of the charges raised against the *Kundun* since 1997 which we treat in more detail in this study: association with the Japanese “poison gas guru” Shoko Asahara (the “Asahara affair”); violent suppression of the free expression of religion within his own ranks (the “Shugden affair”); the splitting of the other Buddhist sects (the “Karmapa affair”); frequent sexual abuse of women by Tibetan lamas (“Sogyal Rinpoche and June Campbell affairs”); intolerance towards homosexuals; involvement in a ritual murder (the events of February 4, 1997); links to National Socialism (the “Heinrich Harrer affair”); nepotism (the “Yabshi affair”); selling out his own country to the Chinese (renunciation of Tibetan sovereignty); political lies; rewriting history; and much more. Overnight the god has become a demon. [4]

And all of a sudden Westerners are beginning to ask themselves whether the king of light from the Himalayas might not have a monstrous shadow. What we mean by the Dalai Lama’s “shadow” is the possibility of a dark, murky, and “dirty” side to both his personality and politicoreligious office in contrast to the pure and brilliant figure he cuts as the “greatest living hero of peace in our century” in the captivated awareness of millions.

For most people who have come to know him personally or via the media, such nocturnal dimensions to His Holiness are unimaginable. The possibility would not even occur to them, since the Kundun has grasped how to effectively conceal the threatening and demonic aspects of Tibetan Buddhism and the many dark chapters in the history of Tibet. Up until 1996 he had succeeded —the poorly grounded Chinese critique aside — in playing the shining hero on the world stage.

### Plato's cave

The shadow is the “other side” of a person, his “hidden face”, the shadows are his “occult depths”. Psychoanalysis teaches us that there are four ways of dealing with our shadow: we can deny it, suppress it, project it onto other people, or integrate it.

But the topic of the shadow does not just have a psychological dimension; ever since Plato's famous analogy of the cave it has become one of the favorite motifs of Western philosophy. In his *Politeia* (The State), Plato tells of an “unenlightened” people who inhabit a cave with their backs to the entrance. Outside shines the light of eternal and true reality, but as the people have turned their backs to it, all they see are the *shadows* of reality which flit sketchily across the walls of the cave before their eyes. Their human attentiveness is magically captivated by this shadowy world and they thus perceive only dreams and illusions, never higher reality itself. Should a cave dweller one day manage to escape this dusky dwelling, he would recognize that he had been living in a world of illusions.

This parable was adapted by Friedrich Nietzsche in Aphorism 108 of his *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* [The Gay Science] and — of interest here — linked to the figure of Buddha: “For centuries after Buddha had died,” Nietzsche wrote, “his shadow was still visible in a cave — a dreadful, spine-chilling shadow. God is dead: but man being the way he is, for centuries to come there will be caves in which his shadow is shown — and we — we must also triumph over his shadow”. [5]

This aphorism encourages us to speculate about the Dalai Lama. He is, after all, worshipped as “God” or as a “living Buddha” (*Kundun*), as a supreme enlightened being. But, we could argue with Nietzsche, the true Buddha (“God”) is dead. Does this make the figure of the Dalai Lama nothing but a shadow? Are pseudo-dogmas, pseudo-rituals, and pseudo-mysteries all that remain of the original Buddhism? Did the historical Buddha Shakyamuni leave us with his “dreadful shadow” (the Dalai Lama) and have we been challenged to liberate ourselves from him? However, we could also speculate as to whether people perceive only the Dalai Lama's silhouette since they still live in the cave of an unenlightened consciousness. If they were to leave this world of illusion, they might experience the *Kundun* as the supreme luminary and Supreme Buddha (ADI BUDDHA).

In our study of the Dalai Lama we offer concrete answers to these and similar metaphysical questions. To do this, however, we must lead our readers into (Nietzsche's) cave, where the "dreadful shadow" of the *Kundun* (a "living Buddha") appears on the wall. Up until now this cave has been closed to the public and could not be entered by the uninitiated.

Incidentally, every Tibetan temple possesses such an eerie room of shadows. Beside the various sacred chambers in which smiling Buddha statues emit peace and composure there are secret rooms known as *gokhangs* which can only be entered by a chosen few. In the dim light of flickering, half-drowned butter lamps, surrounded by rusty weapons, stuffed animals, and mummified body parts, the Tibetan terror gods reside in the *gokhang*. Here, the inhabitants of a violent and monstrous realm of darkness are assembled. In a figurative sense the *gokhang* symbolizes the dark ritualism of Lamaism and Tibet's hidden history of violence. In order to truly get to know the Dalai Lama (the "living Buddha") we must first descend into the "cave" (the *gokhang*) and there conduct a speleology of his religion.

### **"Realpolitik" and the "Politics of Symbols"**

Our study is divided into two parts. The first contain a depiction and critique of the religious foundations of Tibetan ("Tantric") Buddhism and is entitled *Ritual as Politics*. The second part (*Politics as Ritual*) examines the power politics of the *Kundun* (Dalai Lama) and its historical preconditions. The relationship between political power and religion is thus central to our book.

In ancient societies (like that of Tibet), everything that happens in the everyday world — from acts of nature to major political events to quotidian occurrences — is the expression of transcendent powers and forces working behind the scenes. Mortals do not determine their own fates; rather they are instruments in the hands of "gods" and "demons". If we wish to gain any understanding at all of the Dalai Lama's "secular" politics, it must be derived from this atavistic perspective which permeates the traditional cultural legacy of Tibetan Buddhism. For the mysteries that he administers (in which the "gods" make their appearances) form the foundations of his political vision and decision making. State and religion, ritual and politics are inseparable for him.

What, however, distinguishes a "politics of symbols" from "*realpolitik*"? Both are concerned with power, but the methods for achieving and maintaining power differ. In *realpolitik* we are dealing with facts that are both caused and manipulated by people. Here the protagonists are politicians, generals, CEOs, leaders of opinion, cultural luminaries, etc. The methods through which power is exercised include force, war, revolution, legal systems, money, rhetoric, propaganda, public discussions, and bribery.

In the symbolic political world, however, we encounter “supernatural” energy fields, the “gods” and “demons”. The secular protagonists in events are still human beings such as ecclesiastical dignitaries, priests, magicians, gurus, yogis, and shamans. But they all see themselves as servants of some type of superior divine will, or, transcending their humanity they themselves become “gods”, as in the case of the Dalai Lama. His exercise of power thus not only involves worldly techniques but also the manipulation of symbols in rituals and magic. For him, symbolic images and ritual acts are not simply signs or aesthetic acts but rather instruments with which to activate the gods and to influence people’s awareness. His political reality is determined by a “metaphysical detour” via the mysteries. [6]

This interweaving of historical and symbolic events leads to the seemingly fantastic metapolitics of the Tibetans. Lamaism believes it can influence the course of history not just in Tibet but for the entire planet through its system of rituals and invocations, through magic practices and concentration exercises. The result is an atavistic mix of magic and politics. Rather than being determined by parliament and the Tibetan government in exile, political decisions are made by oracles and the supernatural beings acting through them. It is no longer parties with differing programs and leaders who face off in the political arena, but rather distinct and antagonistic oracle gods.

Above all it is in the individual of the Dalai Lama that the entire worldly and spiritual/magic potential of the Tibetan world view is concentrated. According to tradition he is a *sacred* king. All his deeds, however much they are perceived in terms of practical politics by his surroundings, are thus profoundly linked to the Tibetan mysteries.

The latter have always been shrouded in secrecy. The uninitiated have no right to participate or learn about them. Nevertheless, in recent years much information about the Tibetan cults (recorded in the so-called tantra texts and their commentaries) has been published and translated into European languages. The world that opens itself here to Western awareness appears equally fantastic and fascinating. This world is a combination of theatrical pomp, medieval magic, sacred sexuality, relentless asceticism, supreme deification and the basest abuse of women, murderous crimes, maximum ethical demands, the appearance of gods and demons, mystical ecstasy, and cold hard logic all in one powerful, paradoxical performance.

### **Note on the cited literature:**

The original documents which we cite are without exception European-language translations from Sanskrit, Tibetan or Chinese, or are drawn from Western sources. By now, so many relevant texts have been translated that they provide an adequate scholarly basis for a culturally critical examination of Tibetan Buddhism without the need to refer to documents in the original language. For our study, the *Kalachakra Tantra* is central. This has not been translated in its entirety, aside from an extremely problematical handwritten manuscript by the German Tibetologist, Albert Grünwedel, which can be found in the Bavarian State Library in Munich. Important parts of the *Sri*

*Kalachakra* have been translated into English by John Roland Newman, along with a famous commentary on these parts by Pundarika known as the *Vimalaphraba*. (John Ronald Newman - *The outer wheel of time: Vajrayana buddhist cosmology in the Kalacakra Tantra – Vimalaprabhā - nāmamūlatantrānusāriṇī-dvādaśasāhasrikālagukālacakratantrarājaṭikā* ) Madison 1987)

The *Sri Kalachakra (Laghukalachakratantra)* is supposed to be the abridgement of a far more comprehensive original text by the name of *Sekoddessa*. The complete text has been lost — but some important passages from it have been preserved and have been commented upon by the renowned scholar Naropa (10th century). An Italian translation of the commentary by Ranieri Gnoli and Giacomella Orofino is available. Further to this, we have studied every other work on the *Kalachakra Tantra* which we have been able to find in a Western language. We were thus in a position to be able to adequately reconstruct the contents of the “Time Tantra” from the numerous translated commentaries and sources for a cultural historical (and not a philological) assessment of the tantra. This extensive literature is listed at the end of the book. In order to make the intentions and methods of this religious system comprehensible for a Western audience, a comparison with other tantras and with parallels in European culture is of greater importance than a meticulous linguistic knowledge of every line in the Sanskrit or Tibetan original.

In the interests of readability, we have transliterated Tibetan and Sanskrit names without diacritical marks and in this have primarily oriented ourselves to Anglo-Saxon usages.

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### Footnotes:

[1] In the opinion of the Tibet researcher, Peter Bishop, the head of the Lamaist “church” satisfies a “reawakened appreciation of the Divine Father” for many people from the West (Bishop 1993, p. 130). For Bishop, His Holiness stands out as a fatherly savior figure against the insecurities and fears produced by modern society, against the criticisms levelled at monotheistic religions, and against the rubble of the decline of the European system of values.

[2] Through this contradictory effect the Dalai Lama is able to strengthen his superhuman stature with the most banal of words and deeds. Many of His Holiness’s Western visitors, for example, are amazed after an audience that a “god-king” constantly rubs his nose and scratches his head “like an ape”. Yet, writes the Tibet researcher Christiaan Klieger, “such expressions of the body natural do not detract from the status of the Dalai Lama – far from it, as it adds to his personal charisma. It maintains that incongruous image of a divine form in a human body” (Klieger 1991, p 79).

[3] The *Kalachakra* initiations are the most significant rituals which the Dalai Lama conducts, partly in public and in part in secret. By now the public events take place in the presence of hundreds of thousands. Analyses and interpretations of the *Kalachakra* initiations lie at the center of the current study.

[4] Up until 1996 the West needed to be divided into two factions — with the eloquent advocates of Tibetan Buddhism on the one hand, and those who were completely ignorant of the issue and remained silent on the other. In contrast, modern or “postmodern” cultural criticisms of the Buddhist teachings and critical examinations of the Tibetan clergy and the Tibetan state structure were extremely rare (completely the opposite of the case of the literature which addresses the Pope and the Catholic Church). Noncommitted and unfalsified analyses and interpretations of Buddhist or Tibetan history, in brief open and truth-seeking confrontations with the shady side of the “true faith” and its history, have to be sought out like needles in a haystack of ideological glorifications and deliberately constructed myths of history. For this reason those who attempted to discover and reveal the hidden background have had to battle to swim against a massive current of resistance based on pre-formed opinions and deliberate manipulation. This situation has changed in the period since 1996.

[5] The fact that Nietzsche’s aphorism about the shadow is number 108 offers numerologists fertile grounds for occult speculation, as 108 is one of the most significant holy numbers in Tibetan Buddhism. Given the status of knowledge about Tibet at the time, it is hardly likely that Nietzsche chose this number deliberately.

[6] There is nonetheless an occult correlation between “symbolic and ritual politics” and real political events. Thus the Tibetan lamas believe they are justified in subsuming the pre-existing social reality (including that of the West) into their magical world view and subjecting it to their “irrational” methods. With a for a contemporary awareness audacious seeming thought construction, they see in the processes of world history not just the work of politicians, the military, and business leaders, but declare these to be the lackeys of divine or demonic powers.

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## Part I

# RITUAL AS POLITICS

*Playboy:*

Are you actually interested in the topic of sex?

*(14th) Dalai Lama:*

My goodness! You ask a 62-year-old monk

who has been celibate his entire life a thing like that.

I don't have much to say about sex

— other than that it is completely okay

if two people love each other.

(The Fourteenth Dalai Lama in a *Playboy*

interview (German edition), March 1998)

## 1. BUDDHISM AND MISOGYNY – AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

A well-founded critique and — where planned — a deconstruction of the Western image of Buddhism currently establishing itself should concentrate entirely upon the particular school of Buddhism known as “Tantrism” (*Tantrayana* or *Vajrayana*) for two reasons. [1] The first is that the “tantric way” represents the most recent phase in the history of Buddhism and is with some justification viewed as the supreme and thus most comprehensive doctrine of the entire system. In a manner of speaking Tantrism has integrated all the foregoing Buddhist schools within itself, and further become a receptacle for Hindu, Iranian, Central Asian, and even Islamic cultural influences. Thus — as an oft-repeated *Tantrayana* statement puts it — one who has understood the “Tantric Way” has also understood all other paths to enlightenment.

The second reason for concentrating upon Tantrism lies in the fact that it represents the most widely distributed form of Buddhism in the West. It exerts an almost magical attraction upon many in America and Europe. With the Dalai Lama at its head and its clergy of exiled Tibetans, it

possesses a powerful and flexible army of missionaries who advance the Buddhization of the West with psychological and diplomatic skill.

It is the goal of the present study to work out, interpret and evaluate the motives, practices and visions of Tantric Buddhism and its history. We have set out to make visible the archetypal fields and the “occult” powers which determine, or at least influence, the world politics of the Dalai Lama as the supreme representative of *Tantrayana*. For this reason we must familiarize our readers with the gods and demons who –not in our way of looking at things but from a tantric viewpoint — have shaped and continue to shape Tibet’s history. We will thus need to show that the Tibetans experience their history and contemporary politics as the worldly expression of a transcendental reality, and that they organize their lives according to laws which are not of this world. In summary, we wish to probe to the heart of the tantric mystery.

In light of the complexity of the topic, we have resolved to proceed deductively and to preface the entire book with the core statement of our research in the form of a hypothesis. Our readers will thus be set on their way with a statement whose truth or falsity only emerges from the investigations which follow. The formulation of this hypothesis is necessarily very abstract at the outset. Only in the course of our study does it fill out with blood and life, and unfortunately, with violence and death as well. Our core statement is as follows:

**The mystery of Tantric Buddhism consists in the sacrifice**

**of the feminine principle and the manipulation of erotic love**

**in order to attain universal androcentric power**

An endless chain of derived forms of sacrifice has developed out of this central sacrificial event and the associated power techniques: the sacrifice of life, body and soul to the spirit; of the individual to an Almighty God or a higher self; of the feelings to reason; love to omnipotence; the earth to heaven; and so forth. This pervasive sacrificial gnosis, which — as we shall see — ultimately lets the entire universe end in a sea of fire, and which reaches its full maturity in the doctrine of Tantrism, is already in place in the earlier phases of Buddhism, including the legend of Buddha. In order to demonstrate this, we think it sensible to also analyze the three Buddhist stages which precede *Tantrayana* with regard to the “female sacrifice”, the “manipulation of erotic love”, and the “development of androcentric power”.

The history of Buddhism is normally divided into four phases, all of which found their full development in India. The first recounts the legendary life and teachings of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, who bore the name Siddharta Gautama (c.560 B.C.E.–480 B.C.E.). The second

phase, which begins directly following his death, is known as *Theravada* Buddhism. It is somewhat disparagingly termed *Hinayana* or the “Low Vehicle” by later Buddhist schools. The third phase has developed since the second century B.C.E., *Mahayana* Buddhism, or the “Great Vehicle”. Tantrism, or *Tantrayana*, arose in the fourth century C.E. at the earliest. It is also known as *Vajrayana*, or the “Diamond Vehicle”.

Just as we have introduced the whole text with a core hypothesis, we would also like to preface the description of the four stages of historical Buddhism to which we devote the following pages with four corresponding variations upon our basic statement about the “female sacrifice”, the “manipulation of erotic love”, and the “development of androcentric power”:

1. The “sacrifice of the feminine principle” is from the outset a fundamental event in the teachings of Buddha . It corresponds to the Buddhist rejection of life, nature and the soul. In this original phase, the bearer of androcentric power is the historical Buddha himself.
2. In *Hinayana* Buddhism, the “Low Vehicle”, the “sacrifice of the feminine” is carried out with the help of meditation. The *Hinayana* monk fears and dreads women, and attempts to escape them. He also makes use of meditative exercises to destroy and transcend life, nature and the soul. In this phase the bearer of androcentric power is the ascetic holy man or *Arhat*.
3. In *Mahayana*, the “Great Vehicle”, flight from women is succeeded by compassion for them. The woman is to be freed from her physical body, and the *Mahayana* monk selflessly helps her to prepare for the necessary transformation, so that she can become a man in her next reincarnation. The feminine is thus still considered inferior and despicable, as that which must be sacrificed in order to be transformed into something purely masculine. In both founding philosophical schools of *Mahayana* Buddhism (*Madhyamika* and *Yogachara*), life, nature, the body and the soul are accordingly sacrificed to the absolute spirit (*citta*). The bearer of androcentric power in this phase is the “Savior” or *Bodhisattva*.
4. In Tantrism or *Vajrayana*, the tantric master (*yogi*) exchanges compassion with the woman for absolute control over the feminine. With sexual magic rites he elevates the woman to the status of a goddess in order to subsequently offer her up as a real or symbolic sacrifice. The beneficiary of this sacrifice is not some god, but the yogi himself, since he absorbs within himself the complete life energy of the sacrifice. This radical *Vajrayana* method ends in an apocalyptic firestorm which consumes the entire universe within its flames. In this phase the bearer of androcentric power is the “Grand Master” or *Maha Siddha*.

If, as the adherents of Buddhist Tantrism claim, a logic of development pertains between the various stages of Buddhism, then this begins with a passive origin (*Hinayana*), switches to an active/ethical intermediary stage (*Mahayana*), and ends in an aggressive/destructive final phase (*Tantrayana*). The relationship of the three schools to the feminine gender must be characterized as fugitive, supportive and destructive respectively.

Should our hypothesis be borne out by the presentation of persuasive evidence and conclusive argumentation, this would lead to the verdict that in Tantric Buddhism we are dealing with a misogynist, destructive, masculine philosophy and religion which is hostile to life — i.e., the precise opposite of that for which it is trustingly and magnanimously welcomed in the West, above all in the figure of the Dalai Lama.

### **The “sacrifice” of Maya: The Buddha legend**

Even the story of the birth of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni exhibits the fundamentally negative attitude of early Buddhism towards the sexual sphere and toward woman. *Maya*, the mother of the Sublimity, did not conceive him through an admixture of masculine and feminine seed, as usual in Indian thought, nor did he enter the world via the natural birth channel. His conception was occasioned by a white elephant in a dream of Maya's. The Buddha also miraculously left his mother's womb through the side of her hip; the act of birth thus not being associated with any pain.

Why this unnatural birth? Because in Buddhism all the female qualities — menstrual blood, feminine sexuality, conception, pregnancy, the act of childbirth, indeed even a woman's glance or smile — were from the outset considered not to be indicators of the joys of life; rather, in contrast, human life — in the words of Buddha — ultimately exhausts itself in sickness, age and death. It proves itself to be an existence without constancy, as an unenduring element. Life as such, with its constant change and variety, stands opposed in unbearable contrast to eternity and the unity of the spirit. With the abundance of being it tries to soil the “pure emptiness” of consciousness, to scatter the unity of the spirit with its diversity, or — in the words of the best-known contemporary Buddhist cultural theorist, the American Ken Wilber — the “biosphere” (the sphere of life) drags the “noosphere” (the sphere of the spirit) down to a lower evolutionary level. Human life in all its weakness is thus a lean period to be endured along the way to the infinite (“It were better I had never been born”), and woman, who brings forth this wretched existence, functions as the cause of suffering and death.

*Maya* dies shortly after the birth of the Sublimity. As the principle of natural life — her death can be symbolically interpreted this way — she stood in the way of the supernatural path of enlightenment of her son, who wished to free himself and humankind from the unending chain of reincarnation. Is she the ancient primeval mother who dies to make place for the triumphant progress of her sun/son? In Ken Wilber's evolutionary theory, the slaying of the Great Mother is considered the symbolic event which, in both the developmental history of the individual (ontogenesis) and the cultural history of humanity (phylogenesis), must precede an emancipation of consciousness. The ego structure can only develop in a child after the maternal murder, since the infant is still an undifferentiated unity within the motherly source. According to Wilber, a corresponding process can be observed in human history. Here, following the destruction of the matriarchal, “typhonic” mother cult, cultural models have been able to develop patriarchal transcendence and male ego structures.

On the basis of this psychoanalytically influenced thesis, one could interpret *Maya*'s early death as the maternal murder which had to precede the evolution of the male Buddha consciousness. This interpretation receives a certain spark when we realize that the name *Maya* means 'illusion' in Sanskrit. For a contemporary raised within the Western rationalist tradition, such a naming may seem purely coincidental, but in the magic symbolic worldview of Buddhism, above all in Tantrism, it has a deep-reaching significance. Here, as in all ancient cultures, a name refers not just to a person, but also to those forces and gods it evokes.

*Maya* — the name of Buddha's mother — is also the name of the most powerful Indian goddess *Maya*. The entire material universe is concentrated in *Maya*, she is the world-woman. In ceaseless motion she produces all appearances and consumes them again. She corresponds to the *prima materia* of European alchemy, the basic substance in which the seeds of all phenomena are symbolically hidden. The word *maya* is derived from the Sanskrit root *ma-*, which has also given us *mother*, *material*, and *mass*. The goddess represents all that is quantitative, all that is material. She is revered as the "Great Mother" who spins the threads of the world's destiny. The fabric which is woven from this is life and nature. It consists of instincts and feelings, of the physical and the psyche, but not the spirit.

Out of her threads *Maya* has woven a veil and cast this over the transcendental reality behind all existence, a reality which for the Buddhist stands opposed to the world of appearances as the spiritual principle. *Maya* is the feminine motion which disturbs the meditative standstill of the man, she is the change which destroys his eternity. *Maya* casts out her net of "illusion" in order to bind the autonomous ego to her, just as a natural mother binds her child to herself and will not let it go so that it can develop its own personality. In her web she suffocates and keeps in the dark the male ego striving for freedom and light. *Maya* encapsulates the *spirit*, her arch-enemy, in a cocoon. She is the principle of birth and rebirth, the overcoming of which is a Buddhist's highest goal. Eternal life beckons whoever has seen through her deceptions; whoever is taken in will be destroyed and reborn in unceasing activity like all living things.

The death of *Maya*, the great magician who produces the world of illusions, is the *sine qua non* for the appearance of "true spirit". Thus, it was no ordinary woman who died with the passing of Shakyamuni's mother. Her son had descended to earth because he wished to tear aside the veil of illusion and to teach of the *true* reality behind the network of the phenomenal, because he had experienced life and the spirit as forming an incompatible dualism and was convinced that this contradiction could only be healed through the omnipotence of the spirit and the destruction of life. Completely imprisoned within the mythical and philosophical traditions of his time, he sees life, deceptive and sumptuous and behind which Death lurks grinning, as a woman. For him too — as for the androcentric system of religion he found himself within — woman was the dark symbol of transience; from this it follows that he who aspires to eternity must at least symbolically "destroy" the world-woman. That the historical Buddha was spared the conscious execution of this "destructive act" by the natural death of his mother makes no change to the fundamental statement: only through the destruction of *maya* (illusion) can enlightenment be achieved!

Again and again, this overcoming of the feminine principle set off by the early passing of his mother accompanies the historical Buddha on his path to salvation. He experiences both marriage and its polar opposite, sexual dissolution, as two significant barriers blocking his spiritual development that he must surmount. Shakyamuni thus without scruple abandons his family, his wife Yasodhara and his son Rahula, and at the age of 29 becomes “homeless”. The final trigger for this radical decision to give up his royal life was an orgiastic night in the arms of his many concubines. When he sees the “decaying and revolting” faces of the still-sleeping women the next morning, he turns his back on his palace forever. But even once he has found enlightenment he does not return to his own or re-enter the pulsating flow of life. In contrast, he is able to convince Yasodhara and Rahula of the correctness of his ascetic teachings, which he himself describes as a middle way between abstinence and *joie de vivre*. Wife and son follow his example, leave house and home, and join the *sangha*, the Buddhist mendicant order.

The equation of the female with evil, familiar from all patriarchal cultures, was also an unavoidable fact for the historical Buddha. In a famous key dramatic scene, the “daughters of *Mara*” try to tempt him with all manner of ingenious fleshly lures. Woman and her erotic love — the anecdote would teach us — prevent spiritual fulfillment. Archetypally, *Mara* corresponds to the devil incarnate of Euro-Christian mythology, and his female offspring are lecherous witches. But Shakyamuni remained deaf to their obscene talk and was not impressed by their lascivious gestures. He pretended to see through the beauty of the devil’s daughters as flimsy appearance by roaring at them like a lion, “This [your] body is a swamp of garbage, an infectious heap of impurities. How can anybody take pleasure in such wandering latrines?” (quoted by Faure, 1994, p. 29).

During his lifetime, the historical Buddha was plagued by a chronic misogyny; of this, in the face of numerous documents, there can not be slightest doubt. His woman-scoring sayings are disrespectful, caustic and wounding. “One would sooner chat with demons and murderers with drawn swords, sooner touch poisonous snakes even when their bite is deadly, than chat with a woman alone” (quoted by Bellinger, 1993, p. 246), he preached to his disciples, or even more aggressively, “It were better, simpleton, that your sex enter the mouth of a poisonous snake than that it enter a woman. It were better, simpleton, that your sex enter an oven than that it enter a woman” (quoted by Faure, 1994, p. 72). Enlightenment and intimate contact with a woman were not compatible for the Buddha. “But the danger of the shark, ye monks, is a characteristic of woman”, he warned his followers (quoted by Hermann-Pfand, 1992, p. 51). At another point, with abhorrence he composed the following:

**Those are not wise**

**Act like animals**

**Racing toward female forms**

**Like hogs toward mud**

.....

**Because of their ignorance**

**They re bewildered by women, who**

**Like profit seekers in the marketplace**

**Deceive those who come near**

(quoted by D. Paul, 1985, p. 9)

Buddha's favorite disciple, Ananda, more than once tried to put to his Teacher the explicit desire by women for their own spiritual experience, but the Master's answers were mostly negative. Ananda was much confused by this refractoriness, indeed it contradicted the stated view of his Master that all forms of life, even insects, could achieve Buddhahood. "Lord, how should we behave towards women?", he asked the Sublimity — "Not look at them!" — "But what if we must look at them?" — "Not speak to them" — "But what if we must speak to them?" — "Keep wide awake!" (quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 45)

This disparaging attitude toward everything female is all the more astounding in that the historical Buddha was helped by women at decisive moments along his spiritual journey: following an almost fatal ascetic exercise his life was saved by a girl with a saucer of milk, who taught him through this gesture that the *middle way* between abstinence and *joie de vivre* was the right path to enlightenment, not the dead end of asceticism as preached by the Indian yogis. And again it was women, rich lay women, who supported his religious order (*sangha*) with generous donations, thereby making possible the rapid spread of his teachings.

### **The meditative dismemberment of woman: Hinayana Buddhism**

At the center of *Theravada*, or *Hinayana*, Buddhism — in which Shakyamuni's teachings are preserved and only negligibly further developed following his death — stands the enlightenment of the individual, and, connected to this, his deliberate retreat from the real world. The religious hero of the *Hinayana* is the "holy man" or *Arhat*. Only he who has overcome his individual — and thus inferior — ego, and, after successfully traversing a initiation path rich in exercises, achieves Buddhahood, i.e., freedom from all illusion, may call himself an *Arhat*. He then enters a higher state of consciousness, which the Buddhists call *nirvana* (not-being). In order to reach this final stage, a *Hinayana* monk concerns himself exclusively with his inner spiritual perfection and seeks no contact to any kind of public.

The *Hinayana* believers' general fear of contact is both confirmed and extended by their fear of and flight from the feminine. Completely in accord with the Master, for the followers of *Hinayana* the profane and illusionary world (*samsara*) was identical with the female universe and the network of *Maya*. In all her forms — from the virgin to the mother to the prostitute and the ugly crone — woman stood in the way of the spiritual development of the monk. Upon entering the *sangha* (Buddhist order) a novice had to abandon his wife and children, just as the founder of the order himself had once done. Marriage was seen as a constant threat to the necessary celibacy. It was feared as a powerful competitor which withheld men from the order, and which weakened it as a whole.

Taking Buddha's *Mara* experience as their starting point, his successors were constantly challenged by the dark power and appeal of woman. The literature of this period is filled with countless tales of seductions in which the monks either bravely withstood sexual temptations or suffered terribly for their errant behavior, and the victory of chastity over sexuality became a permanent topic of religious discussion. "Meditational formulae for alleviating lustful thoughts were prescribed", writes Diana Paul, the American religious scholar, "The cathartic release of meditative ecstasy *rivalled* that of an orgasm [...] The image of woman had gradually developed as the antithesis antithesis of religion and morality." (D. Paul, 1985, p. 8) The Buddha had already said of the "archetypal" holy man of this period, the ascetic *Arhat*, that "sexual passion can no more cling to an Arhat than water to a lotus leaf" (quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 46).

In early Buddhism, as in medieval Christian culture, the human body as such, but in particular the female body, was despised as a dirty and inferior thing, as something highly imperfect, that was only superficially beautiful and attractive. In order to meditate upon the transience of all being, the monks, in a widespread exercise, imagined a naked woman. This so-called "analytic meditation" began with a "perfect" and beautiful body, and transformed this step by step into an old, diseased, and dying one, to end the exercise by picturing a rotting and stinking corpse. The female body, as the absolute Other, was meditatively murdered and dismembered as a symbol of the despised world of the senses. Sexual fascination and the irritations of murderous violence are produced by such monastic practices. We return later to historical examples in which monks carried out the dismemberment of women's bodies in reality.

There are startling examples in the literature which show how women self-destructively internalized this denigration of their own bodies. "The female novice should hate her impure body like a jail in which she is imprisoned, like a cesspool into which she has fallen", demands an abbess of young nuns. (Faure, 1994, p. 29) Only in as far as they rendered their body and sexuality despicable, and openly professed their inferiority, could women gain a position within the early Buddhist community at all.

In the *Vinaya Pitaka*, the great book of rules of the order, which is valid for all the phases of Buddhism, we find eight special regulations for nuns. One of these prescribes that they have to bow before even the lowliest and youngest of monks. This applies even to the honorable and

aged head of a respected convent. Only with the greatest difficulty could the Buddha be persuaded to ordinate women. He was convinced that this would cause his doctrine irreparable damage and that it would thus disappear from India 500 years earlier than planned. Only after the most urgent pleas from all sides, but primarily due to the flattering words of his favorite disciple, Ananda, did he finally concede.

But even after granting his approval the Buddha remained skeptical: "To go forth from home under the rule of the Dharma as announced by me is not suitable by women. There should be no ordination or nunhood. And why? If women go forth from the Household life, then the rule of Dharma will not be maintained over a long period." (quoted by D. Paul, 1985, p. 78). This reproach, that a nun would neglect her family life, appears downright absurd within the Buddhist value system, since for a man it was precisely his highest duty to leave his family, house and home for religious reasons.

Because of the countless religious and social prejudices, the orders of nuns were never able to fully flourish in Buddhist culture, remained few in number, and to the present day play a completely subordinate role within the power structures of the androcentric monastic orders (*sangha*) of all schools.

### **The transformation of women into men: Mahayana Buddhism**

In the following phase of *Mahayana* Buddhism (from 200 B.C.E.), the "Great Vehicle", the relation to the environment changes radically. In place of the passive, asocial and self-centered exercises of the *Arhat*, the compassionate activities of the *Bodhisattva* now emerge. Here we find a superhuman deliverer of salvation, who has renounced the highest fruits of final enlightenment, i.e., the entry into *nirvana* (not-being), in order to help other beings to also set out along the spiritual path and liberate themselves. The denial of the world of the *Hinayana* is replaced by compassion (*karuna*) for the world and its inhabitants. In contrast to the *Arhat*, who satisfies himself, the *Bodhisattva*, driven by "selfless love", ideally wanders the land, teaching people the Buddhist truths, and is highly revered by them because of his self-sacrificing and "infinitely kind" acts. All *Bodhisattvas* have open hearts. Like Jesus Christ they voluntarily take on the suffering of others to free them from their troubles and motivate their believers through exemplary good deeds.

The "Great Vehicle" also integrated a large number of deities from other religions within its system and thus erected an impressive Buddhist pantheon. Among these are numerous goddesses, which would certainly have been experienced as a revolution by the anti-woman monks of early Buddhism. However, *Mahayana* at the same time, in several philosophical schools which all — even if with varying arguments — teach of the illusion of the world of appearances (*samsara*), questions this realm of the gods. In the final instance, even the heavenly are affected by the nothingness of all being, or are purely imaginary. "Everything is empty" (*Madhyamika* school) or

“everything is consciousness” (*Yogachara* school) are the two basic maxims of cognitive theory as taught in *Mahayana*.

The *Mahayana* phase of Buddhism took over the *Vinaya Pitaka* (Rules of the Order) from *Hinayana* and thus little changed for the Buddhist nuns. Nonetheless, a redemptive theme more friendly to women took the place of the open misogyny. Although the fundamentally negative evaluation of the feminine was not thus overcome, the *Bodhisattva*, whose highest task is to help all suffering creatures, now open-handedly and selflessly supported women in freeing themselves from the pressing burden of their sex. If the thought of enlightenment awakens in a female being and she follows the *Dharma* (the Buddhist doctrine), then she can gather such great merit that she will be allowed to be reborn as a man in her next life. If she then, in male form, continues to lead an impeccable existence in the service of the “teachings”, then she will, after “her” second death, experience the joy of awakening in the paradise of Buddha, *Amitabha*, which is exclusively populated by men. Thus, albeit in a sublime and more “humane” form, the destruction of the feminine is a precondition for enlightenment in *Mahayana* Buddhism too. Achieving the advanced stages of spiritual development and being born a female are mutually exclusive.

Only at the lower grades (from a total of ten) was it possible in the “Great Vehicle” for a woman to act as a Bodhisattva. Even the famous author of the most popular *Mahayana* text of all, *The Lion’s Roar of Queen Sri Mala* (4th century C.E.), was not permitted to lay claim to all the Bodhisattva stages and therefore did not attain complete Buddhahood. Women were thus fundamentally and categorically denied the role of a “perfected” Buddha. For them, the “five cosmic positions” of *Brahma* (Creator of the World), *Indra* (King of the Gods), Great King, World Ruler (*Chakravartin*), and Bodhisattva of the two highest levels were taboo.

Indeed, even the lower Bodhisattva grades were opened to women by only a few texts, such as the *Lotus Sutra* (c. 100 C.E.) for example. This text stands in crass opposition to the traditional androcentric views which were far more widespread, and are summarized in a concise and unambiguous statement from the great scholar Asangha (4th century C.E.): “Completely perfected Buddhas are not women. And why? Precisely because a Bodhisattva .... has completely abandoned the state of womanhood. Ascending to the most excellent throne of enlightenment, he is never again reborn as a woman. All women are by nature full of defilement and of weak intelligence. And not by one who is by nature full of defilement and of weak intelligence, is completely perfected Buddhahood attained.” (Shaw, 1994, p. 27)

In *Mahayana* Buddhism, gender became a karmic category, whereby incarnation as a woman was equated with lower *karma*. The rebirth of a woman as a man implied that she had successfully worked off her bad karma. Correspondingly, men who had led a sinful life were reincarnated as “little women”.

As so many women nevertheless wished to follow the Way of the Buddha, a possible acceleration of the gender transformation was considered in several texts. In the *Sutra of the Pure Land* female Buddhists had to wait for their rebirth as men before they achieved enlightenment; in other sutras they “merely” needed to change their sex in their current lives and thus achieve liberation. Such sexual transmutations are of course miracles, but a female being who reached for the fruits of the highest Buddhahood must be capable of performing supernatural acts. “If women awaken to the thought of enlightenment,” says the *Sutra on changing the Female Sex*, “then they will have the great and good person’s state of mind, a man’s state of mind, a sage’s state of mind. [...] If women awaken to the thought of enlightenment, then they will not be bound to the limitation of a woman’s state of mind. Because they will not be limited, they will forever separate from the females sex and become sons.” I.e. a male follower of Buddha. (quoted by D. Paul, 1985, p. 175/176).

Many radical theses of *Mahayana* Buddhism (for example, the dogma of the “emptiness of all being”) lead to unsolvable contradictions in the gender question. In principle, the *Dharma* (the teachings) say that a perfect being is free from every desire and therefore needs to be asexual. This requirement, with which the insignificance of gender at higher spiritual levels is meant to be emphasized, however, contradicts the other orthodox rule that only men have earned enlightenment. Such dissonant elements are then taken advantage of by women. There are several extremely clever dialogs in which female Buddhists conclusively annul their female inferiority with arguments which are included within the Buddhist doctrine itself. For example, in the presence of Buddha Shakyamuni the girl Candrotara explains that a sex change from female to male makes no sense from the standpoint of the “emptiness of all appearances” taught in the *Mahayana* and is therefore superfluous. Whether man or woman is also irrelevant for the path to enlightenment as it is described in the *Diamond Sutra*.

The asexuality of *Mahayana* Buddhism has further led to a religious glorification of the image of the mother. This is indeed a most astonishing development, and is not compatible with earlier fundamentals of the doctrine, since the mother is despised as the cause of rebirth just as much as the young woman as the cause of sexual seduction. An apotheosis of the motherly was therefore possible only after the monks had “liberated” the mother archetype from its “natural” attributes such as conception and birth. The “Great Mothers” of *Mahayana* Buddhism, like *Prajnaparamita* for instance, are transcendental beings who have never soiled themselves through contact with base nature (sexuality and childbearing).

They have only their warmth, their protective role, their unconditional readiness to help and their boundless love in common with earthly mothers. These transcendental mothers of the *Mahayana* are indeed powerful heavenly matrons, but the more powerful they are experienced to be, the more they dissolve into the purely allegorical. They represent “perfect wisdom”, the “mother of emptiness”, “transcendent love”. When, however, the genesis of these symbolic female figures is examined (as is done at length in our analysis of *Vajrayana* Buddhism), then they all prove to be the imaginary products of a superior male Buddha being.

In closing this chapter we would like to mention a phenomenon which occurred much more frequently than one would like to accept in *Mahayana*: “compassionate copulation”. Sexual intercourse between celibate monks and female beings was actually allowed in exceptional circumstances: if it was performed out of compassion for the woman to be slept with. There could even be a moral imperative to sleep with a woman: “If a woman falls violently in love with a Bodhisattva and is about to sacrifice her life for him, it is his duty to save her life by satisfying all her desires” (Stevens, 1990, p. 56). At least some monks probably took much pleasure in complying with this commandment.

In Western centers of modern Buddhism too, irrespective of whether Zen or Lamaist exercises are practiced, it is not uncommon for the masters to sleep with their female pupils in order to “spiritually” assist them (Boucher, 1985, p. 239). But it is mostly a more intimate affair than in the case of the present-day Asian guru who boasted to an American interviewer, “I have slept with a thousand women. One of them had a hump. I gave her my love, and she has become a happy person. ... I am a ‘Buddhist scouring pad’. A scouring pad is something which gets itself dirty but at the same time cleans everything it touches” (Faure, 1994, p. 92).

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#### Footnotes:

[1] The Sanskrit word *tantra*, just like its Tibetan equivalent *rguyd*, has many meanings, all of which, however, are originally grouped around terms like ‘thread’, ‘weave’, ‘web’, and ‘network’. From these, ‘system’ and ‘textbook’ finally emerged. The individuals who follow the Tantric Way are called *Tantrika* or *Siddha*. A distinction is drawn between Hindu and Buddhist systems of teaching. The latter more specifically involves a definite number of codified texts and their commentaries.

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## 2. TANTRIC BUDDHISM

The fourth and final phase of Buddhism entered the world stage in the third century C.E. at the earliest. It is known as *Tantrayana*, *Vajrayana* or *Mantrayana*: the “Tantra Vehicle”, the “Diamond Path” or the “Way of the Magic Formulas”. The teachings of *Vajrayana* are recorded in the holy writings, known as *tantras*. These are secret occult doctrines, which — according to legend — had already been composed by Buddha Shakyamuni, but the time was not deemed ripe for them to be revealed to the believers until a thousand years after his death.

It is true that *Vajrayana* basically adheres to the ideas of *Mahayana* Buddhism, in particular the doctrine of the emptiness of all appearances and the precept of compassion for all suffering beings, but the tantric temporarily countermands the high moral demands of the “Great Vehicle” with a radical “amoral” behavioral inversion. To achieve enlightenment in this lifetime he seizes upon methods which invert the classic Buddhist values into their direct opposites.

Tantrism designates itself the highest level of the entire edifice of Buddhist teachings and establishes a hierarchical relation to both previous phases of Buddhism, whereby the lowest level is occupied by *Hinayana* and the middle level by *Mahayana*. The holy men of the various schools are ranked accordingly. At the base rules the *Arhat*, then comes the *Bodhisattva*, and all are reigned over by the *Maha Siddha*, the tantric Grand Master. All three stages of Buddhism currently exist alongside one another as autonomous religious systems.

In the eighth century C.E., with the support of the Tibetan dynasty of the time, Indian monks introduced *Vajrayana* into Tibet, and since then it has defined the religion of the “Land of Snows”. Although many elements of the indigenous culture were integrated into the religious milieu of Tantric Buddhism, this was never the case with the basic texts. All of these originated in India. They can be found, together with commentaries upon them, in two canonical collections, the *Kanjur* (a thirteenth-century translation of the words of Buddha) and the *Tanjur* (a translation of the doctrinal texts from the fourteenth century). Ritual writings first recorded in Tibet are not considered part of the official canon. (This, however, does not mean that they were not put to practical use.)

### The explosion of sexuality: *Vajrayana* Buddhism

All tantras are structurally similar; they all include the transformation of erotic love into spiritual and worldly power. [1] The essence of the entire doctrine is, however, encapsulated in the so-called *Kalachakra Tantra*, or “Time Tantra”, the analysis of which is our central objective. It differs from the remaining tantra teachings in both its power-political intentions and its eschatological visions. It is — we would like to hypothesize in advance — the instrument of a complicated

metapolitics which attempts to influence world events via the use of symbols and rites rather than the tools of *realpolitik*. The “Time Tantra” is the particular secret doctrine which primarily determines the ritual existence of the living Fourteenth Dalai Lama, and the “god-king’s” spiritual world politics can be understood through a knowledge of it alone.

The *Kalachakra Tantra* marks the close of the *creative* phase of *Vajrayana*’s history in the tenth century. No further fundamental tantra texts have been conceived since, whilst countless commentaries upon the existing texts have been written, up until the present day. We must thus regard the “Time Tantra” as the culmination of and finale to Buddhist Tantrism. The other tantric texts which we cite in this study (especially the *Guhyasamaya Tantra*, the *Hevajra Tantra* and the *Candamaharosana Tantra*), are primarily drawn upon in order to decipher the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

At first glance the sexual roles seem to have changed completely in Tantric Buddhism (*Vajrayana*). The contempt for the world of the senses and degradation of women in *Hinayana*, the asexuality and compassion for women in *Mahayana*, appear to have been turned into their opposites here. It all but amounts to an explosion of sexuality, and the idea that sexual love harbors the secret of the universe becomes a spectacular dogma. The erotic encounter between man and woman is granted a mystical aura, an authority and power completely denied it in the preceding Buddhist eras.

With neither timidity nor dread Buddhist monks now speak about “venerating women”, “praising women”, or “service to the female partner”. In *Vajrayana*, every female being experiences exaltation rather than humiliation; instead of contempt she enjoys, at first glance, respect and high esteem. In the *Candamaharosana Tantra* the glorification of the feminine knows no bounds: “Women are heaven; women are Dharma; ... women are Buddha; women are the sangha; women are the perfection of wisdom”(George, 1974, p. 82).

The spectrum of erotic relations between the sexes ranges from the most sublime professions of courtly love to the coarsest pornography. Starting from the highest rung of this ladder, the monks worship the feminine as “perfected wisdom” (*prajnaparamita*), “wisdom consort” (*prajna*), or “woman of knowledge” (*vidya*). This spiritualization of the woman corresponds, with some variation, to the Christian cults of Mary and Sophia. Just as Christ revered the “Mother of God”, the Tantric Buddhist bows down before the woman as the “Mother of all Buddhas”, the “Mother of the Universe”, the “Genetrix”, the “Sister”, and as the “Female Teacher”(Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, pp. 62, 60, 76).

As far as sensual relationships with women are concerned, these are divided into four categories: “laughing, regarding, embracing, and union”. These four types of erotic communication form the pattern for a corresponding classification of tantric exercises. The texts of the *Kriya Tantra* address the category of laughter, those of the *Carya Tantra* that of the look, the *Yoga Tantra*

considers the embrace, and in the writings of the *Anuttara Tantra* (the Highest Tantra) sexual union is addressed. These practices stand in a hierarchical relation to one another, with laughter at the lowest level and the tantric act of love at the highest.

In *Vajrayana* the latter becomes a religious concern of the highest order, the *sine qua non* of enlightenment. Although homosexuality was not uncommon in Buddhist monasteries and was occasionally even regarded as a virtue, the “great bliss of liberation” was fundamentally conceived of as the union of man and woman and accordingly portrayed in cultic images.

However, both tantric partners encounter one another not as two natural people, but rather as two deities. “The man (sees) the woman as a goddess, the woman (sees) the man as a god. By joining the diamond scepter [phallus] and lotus [vagina], they should make offerings to each other” we read in a quote from a tantra (Shaw, 1994, p. 153). The sexual relationship is fundamentally ritualized: every look, every caress, every form of contact is given a symbolic meaning. But even the woman’s age, her appearance, and the shape of her sexual organs play a significant role in the sexual ceremony.

The tantras describe erotic performances without the slightest timidity or shame. Technical instructions in the dry style of sex manuals can be found in them, but also ecstatic prayers and poems in which the tantric master celebrates the erotic love of man and woman. Sometimes this tantric literature displays an innocent *joie de vivre*. The instructions which the tantric Anangavajra offers for the performance of sacred love practices are direct and poetic: “Soon after he has embraced his partner and introduced his member into her vulva, he drinks from her lips which are dripping with milk, brings her to coo tenderly, enjoys rich pleasure and lets her thighs tremble.” (Bharati, 1977, p. 172)

In *Vajrayana* sexuality is the event upon which all is based. Here, the encounter between the two sexes is worked up to the pitch of a true obsession, not — as we shall see — for its own sake, but rather in order to achieve something else, something higher in the tantric scheme of things. In a manner of speaking, sex is considered to be the *prima materia*, the raw primal substance with which the sex partners experiment, in order to distill “pure spirit” from it, just as high-grade alcohol can be extracted from fermented grape must. For this reason the tantric master is convinced that sexuality harbors not just the secrets of humanity, but also furnishes the medium upon which gods may be grown. Here he finds the great life force, albeit in untamed and unbridled form.

It is thus impossible to avoid the impression that the “hotter” the sex gets the more effective the tantric ritual becomes. Even the most spicy obscenities are not omitted from these sacred activities. In the *Candamaharosana Tantra* for example, the lover swallows with joyous lust the washwater which drips from the vagina and anus of the beloved and relishes without nausea her

excrement, her nasal mucus and the remains of her food which she has vomited onto the floor. The complete spectrum of sexual deviance is present, even if in the form of the rite. In one text the initiand calls out masochistically: "I am your slave in all ways, keenly active in devotion to you. O Mother", and the "goddess" — often simulated by a prostitute — answers, "I am called your mistress!" (George, 1974, pp. 67-68).

The erotic burlesque and the sexual joke have also long been a popular topic among the *Vajrayana* monks and have, up until this century, produced a saucy and shocking literature of the picaresque. Great peals of laughter are still heard in the Tibetan lamaseries at the ribald pranks of Uncle Dönba, who (in the 18th century) dressed himself up as a nun and then spent several months as a "hot" lover boy in a convent. (Chöpel, 1992, p. 43)

But alongside such ribaldry we also find a cultivated, sensual refinement. An example of this is furnished by the astonishingly up-to-date handbook of erotic practices, the *Treatise on Passion*, from the pen of the Tibetan Lama Gedün Chöpel (1895–1951), in which the "modern" tantric discusses the "64 arts of love". This Eastern *Ars Erotica* dates from the 1930s. The reader is offered much useful knowledge about various, in part fantastic sexual positions, and receives instruction on how to produce arousing sounds before and during the sexual act. Further, the author provides a briefing on the various rhythms of coitus, on special masturbation techniques for the stimulation of the penis and the clitoris, even the use of dildos is discussed. The Tibetan, Chöpel, does not in any way wish to be original, he explicitly makes reference to the world's most famous sex manual, the *Kama Sutra*, from which he has drawn most of his ideas.

Such permissive "books of love" from the tantric milieu are no longer — in our enlightened era, where (at least in the West) all prudery has been superseded — a spectacle which could cause great surprise or even protest. Nonetheless, these texts have a higher provocative potential than corresponding "profane" works, in which descriptions of the same sexual techniques are otherwise to be found. For they were written by monks for monks, and read and practiced by monks, who in most cases had to have taken a strict oath of celibacy.

For this reason the tantric *Ars Erotica* even today awake a great curiosity and throw up numerous questions. Are the ascetic basic rules of Buddhism really suspended in *Vajrayana*? Is the traditional disrespect for women finally surmounted thanks to such texts? Does the eternal misogyny and the denial of the world make way for an Epicurean regard for sensuality and an affirmation of the world? Are the followers of the "Diamond Path" really concerned with sensual love and mystical partnership or does erotic love serve the pursuit of a goal external to it? And what is this goal? What happens to the women after the ritual sexual act?

In the pages which follow we will attempt to answer all of these questions. Whatever the answers may be, we must in any case assume that in Tantric Buddhism the sexual encounter between man and woman symbolizes a sacred event in which the two primal forces of the universe unite.

### **Mystic sexual love and cosmogonic erotic love**

In the views of *Vajrayana* all phenomena of the universe are linked to one another by the threads of erotic love. Erotic love is the great life force, the *prana* which flows through the cosmos, the cosmic libido. By erotic here we mean heterosexual love as an endeavor independent of its natural procreative purpose for the provision of children. Tantric Buddhism does not mean this qualification to say that erotic connections can only develop between men and women, or between gods and goddesses. erotic love is all-embracing for a tantric as well. But every *Vajrayana* practitioner is convinced that the erotic relationship between a feminine and a masculine principle (*yin-yang*) lies at the origin of all other expressions of erotic love and that this origin may be experienced afresh and repeated microcosmically in the union of a sexual couple. We refer to an erotic encounter between man and woman, in which both experience themselves as the core of all being, as “mystic gendered love”. In Tantrism, this operates as the primal source of cosmogonic erotic love and not the other way around; cosmic erotic love is not the prime cause of a mystical communion of the sexes. Nonetheless, as we shall see, the *Vajrayana* practices culminate in a spectacular destruction of the entire male-female cosmology.

### ***Suspension of opposites***

But let us first return to the apparently healthy continent of tantric eroticism. “It is through love and in view of love that the world unfolds, through love it rediscovers its original unity and its eternal non-separation”, a tantric text teaches us (Faure, 1994, p. 56). Here too, the union of the male and female principles is a constant topic. Our phenomenal world is considered to be the field of action of these two basic forces. They are manifest as polarities in nature just as in the spheres of the spirit. Each alone appears as just one half of the truth. Only in their fusion can they perform the transformation of all contradictions into harmony. When a human couple remember their metaphysical unity they can become one spirit and one flesh. Only through an act of love can man and woman return to their divine origin in the continuity of all being. The tantric refers to this mystic event as *yuganaddha*, which literally means ‘united as a couple’.

Both the bodies of the lovers and the opposing metaphysical principles are united. Thus, in Tantrism there is no contradiction between erotic and religious love, or sexuality and mysticism. Because it repeats the love-play between a masculine and a feminine pole, the whole universe dances. *Yin* and *yang*, or *yab* and *yum* in Tibetan, stand at the beginning of an endless chain of polarities, which proves to be just as colorful and complex as life itself.



***The divine couple in Tantric Buddhism:***

***Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri***

The “sexual” is thus in no way limited to the sexual act, but rather embraces all forms of love up to and including *agape*. In Tantrism there is a polar eroticism of the body, a polar eroticism of the heart, and sometimes — although not always — a polar eroticism of the spirit. Such an omnipresence of the sexes is something very specific, since in other cultures “spiritual love” (*agape*), for example, is described as an occurrence beyond the realm of *yin* and *yang*. But in contrast *Vajrayana* shows us how heterosexual erotic love can refine itself to lie within the most sublime spheres of mysticism without having to surrender the principle of polarity. That it is nonetheless renounced in the end is another matter entirely.

The “holy marriage” suspends the duality of the world and transforms it into a “work of art” of the creative polarity. The resources of our discursive language are insufficient to let us express in words the mystical fusion of the two sexes. Thus the “nameless” rapture can only be described in

words which say what it is not: in the *yuganaddha*, “there is neither affirmation nor denial, neither existence nor non-existence, neither non-remembering nor remembering, neither affection nor non-affection, neither the cause nor the effect, neither the production nor the produced, neither purity nor impurity, neither anything with form, nor anything without form; it is but the synthesis of all dualities” (Dasgupta, 1974, p. 114).

Once the dualism has been overcome, the distinction between self and other becomes irrelevant. Thus, when man and woman encounter one another as primal forces, “egoness [is] lost, and the two polar opposites fuse into a state of intimate and blissful oneness” (Walker, 1982, p. 67). The tantric *Adyavajra* described this process of the overcoming of the self as the “highest spontaneous common feature” (Gäng, 1988, p. 85).

The co-operation of the poles now takes the place of the battle of opposites (or sexes). Body and spirit, erotic love and transcendence, emotion and intellect, being (*samsara*) and not-being (*nirvana*) become married. All wars and disputes between good and evil, heaven and hell, day and night, dream and reality, joy and suffering, praise and contempt are pacified and suspended in the *yuganaddha*. Miranda Shaw, a religious scholar of the younger generation, describes “a Buddha couple, or male and female Buddha in union ... [as] an image of unity and blissful concord between the sexes, a state of equilibrium and interdependence. This symbol powerfully evokes a state of primordial wholeness and completeness of being.” (Shaw, 1994, p. 200)

But is this state identical to the unconscious ecstasy we know from orgasm? Does the suspension of opposites occur with both partners in a trance? No — in Tantrism god and goddess definitely do not dissolve themselves in an ocean of unconsciousness. In contrast, they gain access to the non-dual knowledge and thus discern the eternal truth behind the veil of illusions. Their deep awareness of the polarity of all being gives them the strength to leave the “sea of birth and death” behind them.

Divine erotic love thus leads to enlightenment and salvation. But it is not just the two partners who experience redemption, rather, as the tantras tell us, all of humanity is liberated through mystical sexual love. In the *Hevajra-Tantra*, when the goddess *Nairatmya*, deeply moved by the misery of all living creatures, asks her heavenly spouse to reveal the secret of how human suffering can be put to an end, the latter is very touched by her request. He kisses her, caresses her, and, whilst in union with her, he instructs her about the sexual magic yoga practices through which all suffering creatures can be liberated (Dasgupta, 1974, p. 118). This “redemption via erotic love” is a distinctive characteristic of Tantrism and only very seldom to be found in other religions.

### ***Cultic worship of the sexual organs***

What symbols are used to express this creative polarity in *Vajrayana*? Like many other cultures Tantric Buddhism makes use of the hexagram, a combination of two triangles. The masculine triangle, which points upward, represents the phallus, and the downward-pointing, feminine triangle the vagina. Both of these sexual organs are highly revered in the rituals and meditations of Tantrism.

Another highly significant symbol for the masculine force and the phallus is a symmetrical ritual object called the *vajra*. As the divine virility is pure and unshakable, the *vajra* is described as a “diamond” or “jewel”. As a “thunderbolt” it is one of the lightning symbols. Everything masculine is termed *vajra*. It is thus no surprise that the male seed is also known as *vajra*. The Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit word is *dorje*, which also has additional meanings, all of which are naturally associated with the masculine half of the universe. The Tibetans term the translucent colors of the sky and firmament *dorje*. Even in pre-Buddhist times the peoples of the Himalayas worshipped the vault of the heavens as their divine Father.



***Vajra and Gantha (bell)***

The female counterpart to the *vajra* is the lotus blossom (*padma*) or the bell (*gantha*). Accordingly, both *padma* and *gantha* represent the vagina (*yonī*). It may come as a surprise to most Europeans how much reverence the *yonī* is accorded in Tantrism. It is glorified as the “seat of great pleasure” (Bhattacharyya, 1982, p. 228). In “the lap of the diamond woman” the yogi finds a “location of security, of peace and calm and, at the same time, of the greatest happiness” (Gäng, 1988, p. 89). “Buddhahood resides in the female sex organs”, we are instructed by another text (Stevens,

1990, p. 65). Gedün Chöpel has given us an enthusiastic hymn to the pudenda: “It is raised up like the back of a turtle and has a mouth-door closed in by flesh. ... See this smiling thing with the brilliance of the fluids of passion. It is not a flower with a thousand petals nor a hundred; it is a mound endowed with the sweetness of the fluid of passion. The refined essence of the juices of the meeting of the play of the white and red [fluids of male and female], the taste of self-arisen honey is in it.” (Chöpel, 1992, p. 62). No wonder, with such hymns of praise, that a regular sacred service in honor of the vagina emerged. This accorded the goddess great material and spiritual advantages. “Aho!”, we hear her call in the *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, “I will bestow supreme success on one who ritually worships my lotus [vagina], bearer of all bliss” (Shaw, 1994, p. 155).

This high esteem for the female sexual organs is especially surprising in Buddhism, where the vagina is after all the gateway to reincarnation, which the tantric strives with every means to close. For this reason, for all the early Buddhists, irrespective of school, the human birth channel counted as one of the most ominous features of our world of appearances. But precisely because the yoni thrusts the ordinary human into the realm of suffering and illusion it has — as we shall see — become a “threshold to enlightenment” (Shaw, 1994, p. 59) for the tantric. Healed by the mystic sexual act, it is also accorded a higher, transcendental procreative function. From it emerges the powerful host of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. We read in the relevant texts “that the Buddha resides in the womb of the goddess and the way of enlightenment [is experienced] as a pregnancy” (Faure, 1994, p. 189).

This central worship of the yoni has led to a situation in which nearly all tantra texts begin with the fundamental sentence, “I have heard it so: once upon a time the Highest Lord lingered in the vaginas of the diamond women, which represent the body, the language and the consciousness of all Buddhas”. Just as the opening letters of the Bible are believed in a tenet of the Hebraic Kabbala to contain the concentrated essence of the entire Holy Book, so too the first four letters of this tantric introductory sentence — *evam* (‘I have heard it so’) — encapsulate the entire secret of the Diamond Path. “It has often been said that he who has understood *evam* has understood everything” (Banerjee, 1959, p. 7).

The word (*evam*) is already to be found in the early Gupta scriptures (c. 300 C.E.) and is represented there in the form of a hexagram, i.e., the symbol of mystic sexual love. The syllable *e* stands for the downward-pointing triangle, the syllable *vam* is portrayed as an upright triangle. Thus *e* represents the *yonī* (vagina) and *vam* the *lingam* (phallus). *E* is the lotus, the source, the location of all the secrets which the holy doctrine of the tantras teaches; the citadel of happiness, the throne, the Mother. *E* further stands for “emptiness and wisdom”. Masculine *vam* on the other hand lays claims to reverence as “*vajra*, diamond, master of joys, method, great compassion, as the Father”. *E* and *vam* together form “the seal of the doctrine, the fruit, the world of appearances, the way to perfection, father (*yab*) and mother (*yum*)” (see, among others, Farrow and Menon, 1992, pp. xii ff.). The syllables *e-vam* are considered so powerful that the divine couple can summon the entire host of male and female Buddhas with them.

### *The origin of the gods and goddesses*

From the primordial tantric couple emanate pairs of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, gods and demons. Before all come the five male and five female *Tathagatas* (Buddhas of meditation), the five *Herukas* (wrathful Buddhas) in union with their partners, the eight *Bodhisattvas* with their consorts. We also meet gods of time who symbolize the years, months and days, and the “seven shining planetary couples”. The five elements (space, air, fire, water and earth) are represented in pairs in divine form — these too find their origin in mystic sexual love. As it says in the *Hevajra Tantra*: “By uniting the male and female sexual organs the holder of the Vow performs the erotic union. From contact in the erotic union, as the quality of hardness, Earth arises; Water arises from the fluidity of semen; Fire arises from the friction of pounding; Air is famed to be the movement and the Space is the erotic pleasure” (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 134).

It is not just the “pure” elements which come from the erotic communion, so do mixtures of them. Through the continuous union of the masculine with the feminine the procreative powers flow into the world from all of their body parts. In a commentary by the famous Tibetan scholar Tsongkhapa, we read how the legendary Mount Meru, the continents, mountain ranges and all earthly landscapes emerge from the essence of the hairs of the head, the bones, gall bladder, liver, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, ribs, excrement, filth (!), and pus (!). The springs, waterfalls, ponds, rivers and oceans form themselves out of the tears, blood, menses, seed, lymph fluid and urine. The inner fire centers of the head, heart, navel, abdomen and limbs correspond in the external world to fire which is sparked by striking stones or using a lens, a fireplace or a forest fire. Likewise all external wind phenomena echo the breath which moves through the bodies of the primeval couple (Wayman, 1977, pp. 234, 236).

In the same manner, the five “aggregate states” (consciousness, intellect, emotions, perception, bodiliness) originate in the primordial couple. The “twelve senses” (sense of hearing, other phenomena, sense of smell, tangible things, sense of sight, taste, sense of taste, sense of shape, sense of touch, smells, sense of spirit, sounds) are also emanations of mystic sexual love. Further, each of the twelve “abilities to act” is assigned to a goddess or a god — (the ability to urinate, ejaculation, oral ability, defecation, control of the arm, walking, leg control, taking, the ability to defecate, speaking, the “highest ability” (?), urination).

Alongside the gods of the “domain of the body” we find those of the “domain of speech”. The divine couple count as the origin of language. All the vowels (*ali*) are assigned to the goddess; the god is the father of the consonants (*kali*). When *ali* and *kali* (which can also appear as personified divinities) unite, the syllables are formed. Hidden within these as if in a magic egg are the verbal seeds (*bija*) from which the linguistic universe grows. The syllables join with one another to build sound units (*mantras*). Both often have no literal meaning, but are very rich in emotional, erotic, magical and mystical intentions. Even if there are many similarities between them, the divine language of the tantras is still held to be more powerful than the poetry of the West, as gods can be commanded through the ritual singing of the germinal syllables. In *Vajrayana* each god and every divine event obeys a specific *mantra*.

As erotic love leaves nothing aside, the entire spectrum of the gods' emotions (as long as these belong to the domain of desire) is to originally be found in the mystical relationship of the sexes. There is no emotion, no mood which does not originate here. The texts speak of "erotic, wonderful, humorous, compassionate, tranquil, heroic, disgusting, furious" feelings (Wayman, 1977, p. 328).

### *The origin of time and emptiness*

In the *Kalachakra Tantra* ("Time Tantra") the masculine pole is the time god *Kalachakra*, the feminine the time goddess *Vishvamata*. The chief symbols of the masculine divinity are the diamond scepter (*vajra*) and the *lingam* (phallus). The goddess holds a lotus blossom or a bell, both symbols of the *yoni* (vagina). He rules as "Lord of the Day", she as "Queen of the Night".

The mystery of time reveals itself in the love of this divine couple. All temporal expressions of the universe are included in the "Wheel of Time" (*kala* means 'time' and *chakra* 'wheel'). When the time goddess *Vishvamata* and the time god *Kalachakra* unite, they experience their communion as "elevated time", as a "mystical marriage", as *Hieros Gamos*. The circle or wheel (*chakra*) indicates "cyclical time" and the law of "eternal recurrence". The four great epochs of the world (*mahakalpa*) are also hidden within the mystery of the tantric primal couple, as are the many chronological modalities. The texts describe the shortest unit of time as one sixty-fourth of a finger snap. Seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years, the entire complex tantric calendrical calculations, all emerge from the mystic sexual love between *Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata*. The four heads of the time god correspond to the four seasons. Including the "third eye", his total of 12 eyes may be apportioned to the 12 months of the year. Counting three joints per finger, in *Kalachakra's* 24 arms there are 360 bones, which correspond to the 360 days of the year in the Tibetan calendar.



### ***Kalachakra and Vishvamata***

Time manifests itself as motion, eternity as standstill. These two elements are also addressed in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Neither cyclical nor chronological time have any influence upon the state of motionlessness during the *Hieros Gamos*. The river of time now runs dry, and the fruit of eternity can be enjoyed. Such an experience frees the divine couple from both past and future, which prove to be illusory, and gives them the timeless present.

What is the situation with the paired opposites of space and time? In European philosophy and theoretical physics, this relationship has given rise to countless discussions. Speculation about the space-time phenomenon are, however, far less popular in Tantrism. The texts prefer the term *shunyata* (emptiness) when speaking of “space”, and point out the secret properties of “emptiness”, especially its paradoxical power to bring forth all things. Space is emptiness, “but space, as understood in Buddhist meditation, is not passive (in the western sense). ... Space is the absolutely indispensable vibrant matrix for everything that is” (Gross, 1993, p. 203).

We can see *shunyata* (emptiness) as the most central term of the entire Buddhist philosophy. It is the second ventricle of *Mahayana* Buddhism. (The first is *karuna*, compassion for all living beings.) “Absolute emptiness” dissolves into nothingness all the phenomena of being up to and including the sphere of the Highest Self. We are unable to talk about emptiness, since the reality of *shunyata* is independent of any conceptual construction. It transcends thought and we are not even able to claim that the phenomenal world does *not* exist. This radical negativism has rightly been described as the “doctrine of the emptiness of emptiness”.

In the light of this fundamental inexpressibility and featurelessness of *shunyata*, one is left wondering why it is unfailingly regarded as a “feminine” principle in *Vajrayana* Buddhism. But it is! As its masculine polar opposite the tantras nominate consciousness (*citta*) or compassion (*karuna*). “The Mind is the Lord and the Vacuity is the Lady; they should always be kept united in Sahaja [the highest state of enlightenment]”, as one text proclaims (Dasgupta, 1974, p. 101). Time and emptiness also complement one another in a polar manner.

Thus, the *Kalachakra* divinity (the time god) cries emphatically that, “through the power of time air, fire, water, earth, islands, hills, oceans, constellations, moon, sun, stars, planets, the wise, gods, ghosts/spirits, *nagas* (snake demons), the fourfold animal origin, humans and infernal beings have been created in the emptiness” (Banerjee, 1959, p. 16). Once she has been impregnated by “masculine” time, the “feminine” emptiness gives birth to everything. The observation that the vagina is empty before it emits life is likely to have played a role in the development of this concept. For this reason, *shunyata* may never be understood as pure negativity in Tantrism, but rather counts as the “shapeless” origin of all being.

### *The clear light*

The ultimate goal of all mystic doctrines in the widest variety of cultures is the ability to experience the highest clear light. Light phenomena play such a significant role in Tantric Buddhism that the Italian Tibetologist, Giuseppe Tucci, speaks of a downright “photism” (doctrine of light). Light, from which everything stems, is considered the “symbol of the highest intrinsicness” (Brauen, 1992, p. 65).

In describing supernatural light phenomena, the tantric texts in no sense limit themselves to tracing these back to a mystical primal light, but rather have assembled a complete catalog of “photisms” which maybe experienced. These include sparks, lamps, candles, balls of light, rainbows, pillars of fire, heavenly lights, and so forth which flash up during meditation. Each of these appearances presages a particular level of consciousness, ranked hierarchically. Thus one must traverse various light stages in order to finally bathe in the “highest clear light”.

The truly unique feature of Tantrism is that this “highest clear light” streams out of the *yuganaddha*, the *Hieros Gamos*. It is in this sense that we must understand the following poetic sentence from the *Kalachakra Tantra*: “In a world purged of darkness, at the end of darkness awaits a couple” (Banerjee, 1959, p. 24).

Summarizing, we can say that Tantrism has made erotic love between the sexes its central religious theme. When the divine couple unite in bliss, then “by the force of their joy the members of the retinue also fuse”, i.e., the other gods and goddesses, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with their wisdom consorts (Wayman, 1968, p. 291). The divine couple is all-knowing, as it knows and indeed itself represents the germinal syllables which produce the cosmos. With their breath the time god (*Kalachakra*) and time goddess (*Vishvamata*) control the motions of the heavens. Astronomy along with every other science has its origin in them. They are initiated into every level of meditation, have mastery over the secret doctrines and every form of subtle yoga. The clear light shines out of them. They know the laws of karma and how they may be suspended. Compassionately, the god and goddess care for humankind as if we were their children and devote themselves to the concerns of the world. As master and mistress of all forms of time they determine the rhythm of history. Being and not-being fuse within them. In brief, the creative polarity of the divine couple produces the universe.

Yet this image of complete beauty between the sexes does not stand on the highest altar of Tantric Buddhism. But what could be higher than the polar principle of the universe and infinity?

### *Wisdom (prajna) and method (upaya)*

Before answering this, we want to quickly view a further pair of opposites which are married in *yuganaddha*. Up to now we have not yet considered the most often cited polarity in the tantras, “wisdom” (*prajna*) and “method” (*upaya*). There is no original tantric text, no Indian or Tibetan commentary and no Western interpreter of Tantrism which does not treat the “union of *upaya* and *prajna*” in depth.

“Wisdom” and “method” are held to be the outright mother and father of all other tantric opposites. Every polar constellation is derived from these two terms. To summarize, *upaya* stands for the masculine principle, the phallus, motion, activity, the god, enlightenment, and so forth; *prajna* represents the feminine principle, the vagina, calm, passivity, the goddess, the cosmic law. All women naturally count as *prajna*, all men as *upaya*. “The commingling of this Prajna and Upaya [are] like the mixture of water and milk in a state of non-duality” (Dasgupta, 1974, p. 93). There is also the stated view that *upaya* becomes a fetter when it is not joined with *prajna*; only both together grant deliverance and Buddhahood (Bharati, 1977, p. 171).



### *Prajna and Upaya*

This almost limitless extension of the two principles has led to a situation in which they are only rarely critically examined. Do they stand in a truly *polar* relation to one another? Why — we ask — does “wisdom” need “method”? Somehow this pair of opposites do not fit together — can there even be an unmethodical, chaotic “wisdom”? Isn’t *prajna* (wisdom) enough on its own; does it not include “method” as a partial aspect of itself? What is an “unmethodical” wisdom? Even if we translate *upaya* — as is often done — as ‘technique’, we still do not have a convincing polar correspondence to *prajna*. This combination also seems far-fetched — why should “technique” and “wisdom” meet in a mystic wedding? The opposition becomes even more absurd and profane if we translate *upaya* (as it is clearly intended) as “cunning means” or even “trick” or “ruse” (Wilber, 1987, p. 310). [2] Whereas with “wisdom” one has some idea of what is meant, comprehending the technoid term *upaya* presents major difficulties. We must thus examine it in more detail.

“At all events”, writes David Snellgrove, a renowned expert on Tantrism, “it must be emphasized that here Means remains a doctrinal concept, serving as means to an end, and in no sense can this concept be construed as an end in itself, as is certainly the case with perfection of wisdom [*prajna*]” (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 283). “Method” is thus an instrument which is to be combined with a content, “wisdom”. “Wisdom”, Snellgrove adds, “can be seen as representing the evolving universe” (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 244). Due to the distribution of both principles along gender lines this has a feminine quality.

The instrumental “method”, which is assigned to the masculine sphere, thus proves itself — as we shall explain in more detail — to be a sacred technique for controlling the feminine “wisdom”. *Upaya* is nothing more than an instrument of manipulation, without any unique content or substance of its own. Method is at best the means to an end (i.e., wisdom). Analytical reserve and technical precision are two of its fundamental properties. Since wisdom — as we can infer from the quotation from Snellgrove — represents the entire universe, *upaya* is the method with which the universe can be manipulated; and since *prajna* represents the feminine principle and *upaya* the masculine, their union implies a manipulation of the feminine by the masculine.

To illustrate this process, we should take a quick look at a Greek myth which recounts how Zeus acquired wisdom (*Metis*). One day the father of the gods swallowed the female Titan *Metis*. (In Greek, *metis* means “wisdom”.) “Wisdom” survived in his belly and gave him advice from there. According to this story then, Zeus’s sole contribution toward the development of “his” wisdom was a cunning swallow. With this coarse but effective method (*upaya*) he could now present himself as the fount of all wisdom. He even became, through the birth of *Athena*, the masculine “bearer” of feminine *prajna*. *Metis*, the mother of *Athena*, actually gives birth to her daughter in the stomach of the father of the gods, but it is he who brings her willy-nilly into the world. In full armor, *Athene*, herself a symbol of wisdom, bursts from the top of Zeus’s skull. She is the “head birth” of her father, the product of his ideas.

Here, the swallowing of the feminine and its imaginary (re)production (head birth) are the two techniques (*upaya*) with which Zeus manipulates wisdom (*prajna*, *Metis*, *Athene*) to his own ends. We shall later see how vividly this myth illustrates the process of the tantric mystery.

At any rate, we would like to hypothesize that the relation between the two tantric principles of “wisdom” and “method” is neither one of complementarity, nor polarity, nor even antinomy, but rather one of androcentric hegemony. The translation of *upaya* as ‘trick’ is thoroughly justified. We can thus in no sense speak of a “mystic marriage” of *prajna* and *upaya*, and unfortunately we must soon demonstrate that very little of the widely distributed (in the West) conception of Tantrism as a sublime art of love and a spiritual refinement of the partnership remains.

The worship of “wisdom” (*prajna*) as an embracing cosmic energy already had a significant role to play in *Mahayana* Buddhism. There we find an extensive literature devoted to it, the *Prajnaparamita* texts, and it is still cultivated throughout all of Asia. In the famous *Sutra of Perfected Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses* (c. 100 B.C.E.) for example, the glorification of *prajnaparamita* (“highest transcendental wisdom”) and the description of the Bodhisattva way are central. “If a Bodhisattva wishes to become a Buddha, [...] he must always be energetic and always pay respect to the Perfection of Wisdom [*prajnaparamita*]”, we read there (D. Paul, 1985, p. 135). There are also instances in *Mahayana* iconography where the “highest wisdom” is depicted in the form of a female being, but nowhere here is there talk of manipulation or control

of the “goddess”. Devotion, fervent prayer, hymn, liturgical song, ecstatic excitement, overflowing emotion and joy are the forms of expression with which the believer worships *prajnaparamita*.

### The guru as manipulator of the divine

In view of the previously suggested dissonance between *prajna* and *upaya*, we must ask ourselves who this authority is, who via the “method” makes use of the wisdom-energy for his own purposes. This question is all the more pertinent, since in the visible reality of the tantric religions — in the culture of Tibetan Lamaism for instance — *Vajrayana* is never represented as a pair of equals, but almost exclusively as single men, in very rare cases as single women. The two partners meet only to perform the ritual sexual act and then separate.

It follows conclusively from what has already been described that it must be the masculine principle which effects the manipulation of the feminine wisdom. It appears in the figure of the “tantric master”. His knowledge of the sacred techniques makes him a “yogi”. Whenever he assumes the role of teacher he is known as a *guru* (Sanskrit) or a *lama* (Tibetan).

How does the tantric master’s exceptional position of power arise? Every *Vajrayana* follower practices the so-called “Deity yoga”, in which the self is imagined as a divinity. The believer distinguishes between two levels. Firstly he meditates upon the “emptiness” of all being, in order to overcome his bodily, mental, and spiritual impurities and “blocks” and create an empty space. The core of this meditative process of dissolution is the surrender of the individual ego. Following this, the living image (*yiddam*) of the particular divine being who should appear in the appropriate ritual is formed in the yogi’s imaginative consciousness. His or her body, color, posture, clothing, facial expression and moods are described in detail in the holy texts and must be recreated exactly in the mind. We are thus not dealing with an exercise of spontaneous and creative free imagination, but rather with an accurate reproduction of a codified archetype.

The practitioner may externalize or project the *yiddam*, so that it appears before him. But this is just the first step; in those which following he imagines himself as the deity. Thus he swaps his own personal ego with that of a supernatural being. The yogi has now surmounted his human existence and constitutes “to the very last atom” a unity with the god (Glasenapp, 1940, p. 101).

But he must never lose sight of the fact that the deity he has imagined possesses no autonomous existence. It exists purely and exclusively as an emanation of his imagination and can thus be created, maintained and destroyed at will. But who actually is this tantric master, this manipulator of the divine? His consciousness has nothing in common with that of an ordinary person, it must belong to a sphere higher than that of the gods. The texts and commentaries describe this “highest

authority” as the “higher self” or as the primeval Buddha (ADI BUDDHA), as the primordial one, the origin of all being, with whom the yogi identifies himself.

Thus, when we speak of a “guru” in *Vajrayana*, then according to the doctrine we are no longer dealing with an individual, but with an archetypal and transcendental being, who has as it were borrowed a human body in order to appear in the world. Events are not in the control of the person (from the Latin *persona* ‘mask’), but rather the god acting through him. This in turn is the emanation of an arch-god, an epiphany of the most high ADI BUDDHA. Followed to its logical conclusion this means that the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (the most senior tantric master of Tibetan Buddhism) determines the politics of the Tibetans in exile not as a person, but as the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara*, whose emanation he is. Thus, if we wish to pass judgment on his politics, we must come to terms with the motives and visions of *Avalokiteshvara*.

The tantric master’s enormous power does not have its origin in a *Vajrayana* doctrine, but in the two main philosophical directions of *Mahayana* Buddhism (*Madhyamika* and *Yogachara*). The *Madhyamika* school of Nagarjuna (fifth century C.E.) discusses the principle of emptiness (*shunyata*) which forms a basis for all being. Radically, this also applies to the gods. They are purely illusory and for a yogi are worth neither more nor less than a tool which he employs in setting his goals and then puts aside.

Paradoxically, this radical Buddhist perceptual theory led to the admission of an immense multitude of gods, most of whom stemmed from the Hindu cultural sphere. From now on these could populate the Buddhist heaven, something which was taboo in *Hinayana*. As they were in the final instance illusory, there was no longer any need to fear them or regard them as competition; since they could be “negated”, they could be “integrated”.

For the *Yogachara* school (fourth century C.E.), everything — the self, the world and the gods — consists of “consciousness” or “pure spirit”. This extreme idealism also makes it possible for the yogi to manipulate the universe according to his wishes and plans. Because the heavens and their inhabitants are nothing more than play figures of his spirit, they can be produced, destroyed and exchanged at whim.

But what, in an assessment of the *Vajrayana* system, should give grounds for reflection is the fact, already mentioned, that the Buddhist pantheon presented on the tantric stage is codified in great detail. Neither in the choreography nor the costumes have there been any essential changes since the twelfth century C.E., if one is prepared to overlook the inclusion of several minor protective spirits, of which the youngest (*Dorje Shugden* for example) date from the seventeenth century. In current “Deity yoga”, practiced by an adept today (even one from the West), a preordained heaven with its old gods is conjured up. The adept calls upon primeval images which were developed in Indian/Tibetan, perhaps even Mongolian, cultural circles, and which of course

— as we will demonstrate in detail in the second part of our study — represent the interests and political desires of these cultures. [3]

Since the Master resides on a level higher than that of a god, and is, in the final instance, the ADI BUDDHA, his pupils are obliged to worship him as an omnipotent super-being, who commands the gods and goddesses, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The following apotheosis of a tantric teacher, which the semi-mythical founder of Buddhism in Tibet, Padmasambhava, laid down for an initiand, is symptomatic of countless similar prayers in the liturgy of Tantrism: “You should know that one’s master is more important than even the thousand buddhas of this aeon. Why is that? It is because all the buddhas of this aeon appeared after having followed a master. ... The master is the buddha [enlightenment], the master is the dharma [cosmic law], in the same way the master is also the sangha [monastic order]” (Binder-Schmidt, 1994, p. 35). In the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* we can read how all enlightened beings bow down before the teacher: “All the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas throughout the past, present and future worship the Teacher .... [and] make this pronouncing of *vajra* words: ‘He is the father of all us Buddhas, the mother of all us Buddhas, in that he is the teacher of all us Buddhas’” (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 177).

A bizarre anecdote from the early stages of Tantrism makes this deification of the gurus even more apparent. One day, the famous *vajra* master, Naropa, asked his pupil, Marpa, “If I and the god *Hevajra* appeared before you at the same time, before whom would you kneel first?”. Marpa thought, “I see my guru every day, but if *Hevajra* reveals himself to me then that is indeed a quite extraordinary event, and it would certainly be better to show respect to him first!”. When he told his master this, Naropa clicked two fingers and in that moment *Hevajra* appeared with his entire retinue. But before Marpa could prostrate himself in the dust before the apparition, with a second click of the fingers it vanished into Naropa’s heart. “You made a mistake!” cried the master (Dhargyey, 1985, p. 123).

In another story, the protagonists are this same Naropa and his instructor, the *Kalachakra* Master Tilopa. Tilopa spoke to his pupil, saying, “If you want teaching, then construct a mandala!”. Naropa was unable to find any seeds, so he made the mandala out of sand. But he sought without success for water to cement the sand. Tilopa asked him, “Do you have blood?” Naropa slit his veins and the blood flowed out. But then, despite searching everywhere, he could find no flowers. “Do you not have limbs?” asked Tilopa. “Cut off your head and place it in the center of the mandala. Take your arms and legs and arrange them around it!” Naropa did so and dedicated the mandala to his guru, then he collapsed from blood loss. When he regained consciousness, Tilopa asked him, “Are you content?” and Naropa answered, “It is the greatest happiness to be able to dedicate this mandala, made of my own flesh and blood, to my guru”.

The power of the gurus — this is what these stories should teach us — is boundless, whilst the god is, finally, just an illusion which the guru can produce and dismiss at will. He is the arch-lord, who reigns over life and death, heaven and hell. Through him speaks the ABSOLUTE SPIRIT, which tolerates nothing aside from itself.

The pupil must completely surrender his individual ego and transform it into a subject of the SPIRIT which dwells in his teacher. "I and my teacher are one" means then, that the same SPIRIT lives in both.

### **The appropriation of gynergy and androcentric power strategies**

Only in extremely rare cases is the omnipotence and divinity of a yogi acquired at birth. It is usually the result of a graded and complicated spiritual progression. Clearly, to be able to realize his omnipotence, which should transcend even the sexual polarity of all which exists, a male tantric master requires a substance, which we term "*gynergy*" (female energy), and which we intend to examine in more detail in the following. As he cannot, at the outset of his path to power, find this "elixir" within himself, he must seek it there where in accordance with the laws of nature it may be found in abundance, in women.

*Vajrayana* is therefore — according to the assessments of no small number of Western researchers of both sexes — a male sexual magic technique designed to "rob" women of their particularly female form of energy and to render it useful for the man. Following the "theft", it flows for the tantric adept as the spring which powers his experiences of spiritual enlightenment. All the potencies which, from a Tibetan point of view, are to be sought and found in the feminine sphere are truly astonishing: knowledge, matter, sensuality, language, light — indeed, according to the tantric texts, the yogi perceives the whole universe as feminine. For him, the feminine force (*shakti*) and feminine wisdom (*prajna*) constantly give birth to reality; even transcendental truths such as "emptiness" (*shunyata*) are feminine. Without "*gynergy*", in the tantric view of things none of the higher levels along the path to enlightenment can be reached, and hence in no circumstances a state of perfection.

In order to be able to acquire the primeval feminine force of the universe, a yogi must have mastered the appropriate spiritual methods (*upaya*), which we examine in detail later in this study. The well-known investigator of Tibetan culture, David Snellgrove, describes their chief function as the transmutation of the feminine form into the masculine with the intention of accumulating power. It is for this and no other reason that the tantric seeks contact with a female. Usually, "power flows from the woman to the man, especially when she is more powerful than he", the Indologist Doniger O'Flaherty (O'Flaherty, 1982, p. 263) informs us. Hence, since the powerful feminine creates the world, the "uncreative" masculine yogi can only become a creator if he appropriates the creative powers of the goddess. "May I be born from birth to birth", he thus cries in the *Hevajra Tantra*, "concentrating in myself the essence of woman" (Snellgrove, 1959, p. 116). He is the sorcerer who believes that all power is feminine, and that he knows the secret of how to manipulate it.

The key to his dreams of omnipotence lies in how he is able to transform himself into a “supernatural” being, an *androgyny* who has access to the potentials of both sexes. The two sexual energies now lose their equality and are brought into a hierarchical relation with each other in which the masculine part exercises absolute control over the feminine.

When, in the reverse situation, the feminine principle appropriates the masculine and attempts to dominate it, we have a case of *gynandry*. Gynandric rites are known from the Hindu tantras. But in contrast, in androcentric Buddhism we are dealing exclusively with the production of a “perfect” androgynous state, i.e., in social terms with the power of men over women or, in brief, the establishment of a patriarchal monastic regime.

Since the “bisexuality” of the yogi represents a precondition for the development of his power, it forms a central topic of discussion in every highest tantra. It is known simply as the “two-in-one” principle, which suspends all oppositions, such as wisdom and method, subject and object, emptiness and compassion, but above all masculine and feminine (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 285). Other phrases include “bipolarity” or the realization of “bisexual divinity within one’s own body” (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 314).

However, the “two-in-one” principle is not directed at a state beyond sexuality and erotic love, as modern interpreters often misunderstand it to be. The tantric master deliberately utilizes the masculine/feminine sexual energies to obtain and exercise power and does not destroy them, even if they are only present within his own identity after the initiation. They continue to function there as the two polar primeval forces, but now within the androgynous yogi.

Thus, in Tantrism we are in any case dealing with an erotic cult, one which recognizes cosmic erotic love as the defining force of the universe, even if it is manipulated in the interests of power. This is in stark contrast to the asexual concepts of *Mahayana* Buddhism. “The state of bisexuality, defined as the possession of both masculine and feminine sexual powers, was considered unfortunate, that is, not conducive to spiritual growth. Because of the excessive sexual power of both masculinity and femininity, the bisexual individual had weakness of will or inattention to moral precepts”, reports Diana Paul in reference to the “Great Vehicle” (D. Paul, 1985, pp. 172–173).

But *Vajrayana* does not let itself be intimidated by such proclamations, but instead worships the androgyny as a radiant diamond being, who feels in his heart “the blissful kiss of the inner male and female forces” (Mullin, 1991, p. 243). The tantric androgyny is supposed to actually partake of the lusts and joys of both sexes, but just as much of their concentrated power. Although in his earthly form he appears before us as a man, the yogi nonetheless rules as both man *and* woman, as god *and* goddess, as father *and* mother at once. The initiand is instructed to “visualize the lama as *Kalachakra* in Father and Mother aspect, that is to say, in union with his consort” (Dalai Lama

XIV, 1985, p. 174), and must then declare to his guru, “You are the mother, you are the father, you are the teacher of the world!” (Grünwedel, *Kalacakra II*, p. 180).

### *The vaginal Buddha*

The goal of androgyny is the acquisition of absolute power, as, according to tantric doctrine, the entire cosmos must be seen as the play and product of both sexes. Now united in the mystic body of the yogi, the latter thereby believes he has the secret birth-force at his disposal — that natural ability of woman which he as man principally lacks and which he therefore desires so strongly.

This desire finds expression in, among other things, the royal title *Bhagavan* (ruler or regent), which he acquires after the tantric initiation. The Sanskrit word *bhaga* originally designated the female pudendum, womb, vagina or vulva. But *bhaga* also means happiness, bliss, wealth, sometimes emptiness. This metaphor indicates that the multiplicity of the world emerges from the womb of woman. The yogi thus lets himself be revered in the *Kalachakra Tantra* as *Bhagavat* or *Bhagavan*, as a bearer of the female birth-force or alternatively as a “bringer of happiness”. “The Buddha is called *Bhagavat*, because he possesses the *Bhaga*, this characterizes the quality of his rule” (Naropa, 1994, p. 136), we can read in Naropa’s commentary from the eleventh century, and the famous tantric continues, “The *Bhaga* is according to tradition the horn of plenty in possession of the six boons in their perfected form: sovereignty, beauty, good name/reputation, abundance, insight, and the appropriate force to be able to achieve the goals set” (Naropa, 1994, p. 136). In their introduction to the *Hevajra Tantra* the contemporary authors, G. W. Farrow and I. Menon, write, “In the tantric view the Bhagavan is defined as the one who possesses Bhaga, the womb, which is the source” (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. xxiii).

Although this male usurpation of the *Bhaga* first reaches its full extent and depth of symbolism in Tantrism, it is presaged by a peculiar bodily motif from an earlier phase of Buddhism. In accordance with a broadly accepted canon, an historical Buddha must identify himself through 32 distinguishing features. These take the form of unusual markings on his physical body, like, for example, sun-wheel images on the soles of his feet. The tenth sign, known to Western medicine as *cryptorchidism*, is that the penis is covered by a thick fold of skin, “the concealment of the lower organs in a sheath”; this text goes on to add, “Buddha’s private parts are hidden like those of a horse [i.e., stallion]” (Gross, 1993, p. 62).

Even if cryptorchidism as an indicator of the Enlightened One in *Mahayana* Buddhism is meant to show his “asexuality”, in our opinion in *Vajrayana* it can only signal the appropriation of feminine sexual energies without the Buddha thus needing to renounce his masculine potency. Instead, in drawing the comparison to a stallion which has a penis which naturally rests in a “sheath”, it is possible to tap into one of the most powerful mythical sexual metaphors of the Indian cultural region. Since the *Vedas* the stallion has been seen as the supreme animal symbol for male potency. In Tibetan folklore, the Dalai Lamas also possess the ability to “retract” their sexual organs (Stevens, 1993, p. 180).

### *The Buddha as mother and the yogi as goddess*

The “ability to give birth” acquired through the “theft” of *gynergy* transforms the guru into a “mother”, a super-mother who can herself produce gods. Every Tibetan lama thus values highly the fact that he can lay claim to the powerful symbols of motherhood, and a popular epithet for tantric yogis is “Mother of all Buddhas” (Gross, 1993, p. 232). The maternal role logically presupposes a symbolic pregnancy. Consequently, being “pregnant” is a common metaphor used to describe a tantric master’s productive capability (Wayman, 1977, p. 57).

But despite all of his motherly qualities, in the final instance the yogi represents the male arch-god, the ADI BUDDHA, who produced the mother goddess out of himself as an archetype: “It is to be noted that the primordial goddess had emanated from the Lord”, notes an important tantra interpreter, “The Lord is the beginningless eternal One; while the Goddess, emanating from the body of the Lord, is the produced one” (Dasgupta, 1946, p. 384). Eve was created from Adam’s rib, as Genesis already informs us. Since, according to the tantric initiation, the feminine should only exist as a manipulable element of the masculine, the tantras talk of the “together born female” (Wayman, 1977, p. 291).

Once the emanation of the mother goddess from the masculine god has been formally incorporated in the canon, there is no further obstacle to a self-imagining and self-production of the lama as goddess. “Then behold yourself as divine woman in empty form” (Evans-Wentz, 1937, p. 177), instructs a guide to meditation for a pupil. In another, the latter declaims, “I myself instantaneously become the Holy Lady” (quoted by Beyer, 1978, p. 378).

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**Steven Segal (Hollywood actor): The Dalai Lama “is the great mother of everything nurturing and loving. He accepts all who come without judgement.” (Schell, 2000, p. 69)**

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Once kitted out with the force of the feminine, the tantric master even has the ability to produce whole hosts of female figures out of himself or to fill the whole universe with a single female figure: “To begin with, imagine the image (of the goddess *Vajrayogini*) of roughly the size of your own body, then in that of a house, then a hill, and finally in the scale of outer space” (Evans-Wentz, 1937, p. 136). Or he imagines the cosmos as an endlessly huge palace of supernatural couples: “All male divinities dance within me. And all female divinities channel their sacred *vajra* songs through me”, the Second Dalai Lama writes lyrically in a tantric song (Mullin, 1991, p. 67). But “then, he [the yogi] can resolve these couples in his meditation. Little by little he realizes that their objective existence is illusory and that they are but a function. ... He transcends them and comes to see them as images reflected in a mirror, as a mirage and so on” (Carelli, 1941, p. 18).

However, outside of the rites and meditation sessions, that is, in the real world, the double-gendered super-being appears almost exclusively in the body of a man and only very rarely as a woman, even if he exclaims in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*, “I am without doubt any figure. I am woman and I am man, I am the figure of the androgyne” (Gäng, 1998, p. 66).

### *What happens to the woman?*

Once the yogi has “stolen” her *gynergy* using sexual magic techniques, the woman vanishes from the tantric scenario. “The feminine partner”, writes David Snellgrove, “known as the Wisdom-Maiden [*prajna*] and supposedly embodying this great perfection of wisdom, is in effect used as a means to an end, which is experienced by the yogi himself. Moreover, once he has mastered the requisite yoga techniques he has no need of a feminine partner, for the whole process is re-enacted within his own body. Thus despite the eulogies of women in these tantras and her high symbolic status, the whole theory and practice is given for the benefit of males” (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 287).

Equivalent quotations from many other Western interpreters of Tantrism can be found: “In ... Tantrism ... woman is means, an alien object, without possibility of mutuality or real communication” (quoted by Shaw, 1994, p. 7). The woman “is to be used as a ritual object and then cast aside” (also quoted by Shaw, 1994, p. 7). Or, at another point: the yogis had “sex without sensuality ... There is no relationship of intimacy with an individual — the woman ... involved is an object, a representation of power ... women are merely spiritual batteries” (quoted by Shaw, 1994, n. 128, pp. 254–255). The woman functions as a “salvation tool”, as an “aid on the path to enlightenment”. The goal of *Vajrayana* is even “to destroy the female” (quoted by Shaw, 1994, p. 7).

Incidentally, this functionalization of the sexual partner is addressed — as we still have to show — without deliberation or shame in the original *Vajrayana* texts. Modern Western authors with views compatible to those of Buddhism, on the contrary, tend toward the opinion that the tantric androgyne harmonizes both sexual roles equally within itself, so that the androgynous pattern is valid for both men and women. But this is not the case. Even at an etymological level, androgyny (from Ancient Greek *anér* ‘man’ and *gyné* ‘woman’) cannot be applied to both sexes. The term denotes — when taken literally — the male-feminine forces possessed by a man, whilst for a woman the respective phenomenon would have to be termed “gynandry” (female-masculine forces possessed by a woman).

### *Androgyny vs. gynandry*

Since androgyny and gynandry are used in reference to the organization of sex-specific energies and not a description of physical sexual characteristics, it could be felt that we are being overly

pedantic here. That would be true if it were not that Tantrism involved an extreme cult of the male body, psyche and spirit. With extremely few exceptions all *Vajrayana* gurus are men. What is true of the world of appearances is also true at the highest transcendental level. The ADI BUDDHA is primarily depicted in the form of a man.

Following our discussion of the “mystic” physiology of the yogi, we shall further be able to see that this describes the construction of a masculine body of energy. But any doubts about whether androgyny represents a virile usurpation of feminine energies ought to vanish once we have aired the secrets of the tantric seed (semen) gnosis. Here the male yogi uses a woman’s menstrual blood to construct his bisexual body.

Consequently, the attempt to create an *androgynous* being out of a woman means that her own feminine essence becomes subordinated to a masculine principle (the principle of *anér*). Even when she exhibits the outward sexual characteristics of a woman (breasts and vagina), she mutates, as we know already from *Mahayana* Buddhism, in terms of energy into a man. In contrast, a truly female counterpart to an androgynous guru would be a gynandric mistress. The question, however, is whether the techniques taught in the Buddhist tantras are at all suitable for instituting a process transforming a woman in the direction of gynandry, or whether they have been written by and for men alone. Only after a detailed description of the tantric rituals will we be able to answer this question.

### **The absolute power of the “Grand Sorcerer” (Maha Siddha)**

The goal of tantric androgyny is the concentration of absolute power in the tantric master, which in his view constitutes the unrestricted control over both cosmic primal forces, the god and the goddess. If one assumes that he has, through constant meditative effort, destroyed his individual ego, then it is no longer a person who has concentrated this power within himself. In place of the human ego is the superego of a god with far-reaching powers. This superhuman subject knows no bounds when it proclaims in the *Hevajra Tantra*, “I am the revealer, I am the revealed doctrine and I am the disciple endowed with good qualities. I am the goal, I am the master of the world and I am the world as well as the worldly things” (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 167). In the tantras there is a distinction between two types of power:

1. **Supernatural power, that is, ultimately, enlightened consciousness and Buddhahood.**
2. **Worldly power such as wealth, health, regency, victory over an enemy, and so forth.**

But a classification of the tantras into a lower category, concerned with only worldly matters, and a higher, in which the truly religious goals are taught, is not possible. All of the writings concern both the “sacred” and the “profane”.

Supernatural power gives the tantric master control over the whole universe. He can dissolve it and re-establish it. It grants him control over space and time in all of their forms of expression. As “time god” (*Kalachakra*) he becomes “lord of history”. As ADI BUDDHA he determines the course of evolution.

Worldly power means, above all, being successfully able to command others. In the universalism of *Vajrayana* those commanded are not just people, but also beings from other transhuman spheres — spirits, gods and demons. These can not be ruled with the means of this world alone, but only through the art of supernatural magic. Fundamentally, then, the power of a guru increases in proportion to the number and effectiveness of his “magical forces” (*siddhis*). Power and the knowledge of the magic arts are synonymous for a tantric master.

Such a pervasive presence of magic is somewhat fantastic for our Western consciousness. We must therefore try to transpose ourselves back to ancient India, the fairytale land of miracles and secrets and imagine the occult ambience out of which Tantric Buddhism emerged. The Indologist Heinrich Zimmer has sketched the atmosphere of this time as follows: “Here magic is something very real. A magic word, correctly pronounced penetrates the other person without resistance, transforms, bewitches them. Then under the spell of involuntary participation the other is porous to the fluid of the magic-making will, it electrically conducts the current which connects with him” (Zimmer, 1973, p. 79). In the Tibet of the past, things were no different until sometime this century. All the phenomena of the world are magically interconnected, and “secret threads [link] every word, every act, even every thought to the eternal grounding of the world” (Zimmer, 1973, p. 18). As the “bearers of magical power” or as “sorcerer kings” the tantric yogis cast out nets woven from such threads. For this reason they are known as *Maha Siddhas*, “Grand Sorcerers”.



**Lamaist “sorcerer” (a Ngak’phang gÇodpa)**

When we pause to examine what the tantras say about the magical objects with which a *Maha Siddha* is kitted out, we are reminded of the wondrous objects which only fairytale heroes possess: a magical sword which brings victory and power over all possible enemies; an eye ointment with which one can discover hidden treasure; a pair of “seven-league boots” that allow the adept to reach any place on earth in no time at all, traveling both on the ground and through the air; there is an elixir which alchemically transforms base metals into pure gold; a magic potion which grants eternal youth and a wonder cure to protect from sickness and death; pills which give him the ability to assume any shape or form; a magic hood that makes the sorcerer invisible. He can assume the appearance of several different individuals at the same time, can suspend gravity and can read people’s thoughts. He is aware of his earlier incarnations, has mastered all meditation techniques; he can shrink to the size of an atom and expand his body outward to the stars. He possesses the “divine eye” and “divine ear”. In brief, he has the power to determine everything according to his will.

The *Maha Siddhas* control the universe through their spells, enchantment formulas, or mantras. “I am aware”, David Snellgrove comments, “that present-day western Buddhists, specifically those who are followers of the Tibetan tradition, dislike this English word [*spell*,] used for mantra and the rest because of its association with vulgar magic. One need only reply that whether one likes

it or not, the greater part of the tantras are concerned precisely with vulgar magic, because this is what most people are interested in" (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 143).

"Erotic" spells, which allow the yogi to obtain women for his sexual magic rituals, are mentioned remarkably often in the tantric texts. He continues to practice the ritual sexual act after his enlightenment: since the key to power lies in the woman every instance of liturgical coition bolsters his omnipotence. It is not just earthly beings who must obey such mantras, but female angels and grisly inhabitants of the underworld too.

The almighty sorcerer can also enslave a woman against her will. He simply needs to summon up an image of the real, desired person. In the meditation, he thrusts a flower arrow through the middle of her heart and imagines how the impaled love victim falls to the ground unconscious. No sooner does she reopen her eyes than the conqueror with drawn sword and out-thrust mirror forces her to accommodate his wishes. This scenario played out in the imagination can force any real woman into the arms of the yogi without resistance (Glasenapp, 1940, p. 144). Another magic power allows him to assume the body of an unsuspecting husband and spend the night with his wife *incognito*, or he can multiply himself by following the example of the Indian god *Krishna* and then sleep with hundreds of virgins at once (Walker, 1982, p. 47).

Finally, we draw attention to a number of destructive *Siddhis* (magical powers): to turn a person to stone, the *Hevajra Tantra* recommends using crystal pearls and drinking milk; to subjugate someone you need sandalwood; to bewitch them, urine; to generate hate between beings from the six worlds, the adept must employ human flesh and bones; to conjure up something, he swings the bones of a dead Brahman and consumes animal dung. With buffalo bones the enlightened one slaughters his enemies (Snellgrove, 1959, p. 118). There are spells which instantly split a person in half. This black art, however, should only be applied to a person who has contravened Buddhist doctrine or insulted a guru. One can also picture the evil-doer vomiting blood, or with a fiery needle boring into his back or a flaming letter branding his heart — in the same instant he will fall down dead (Snellgrove, 1959, pp. 116–117). Using the "chalk ritual" a yogi can destroy an entire enemy army in seconds, each soldier suddenly losing his head (Snellgrove, 1959, p. 52). In the second part of our analysis we will discuss in detail how such magic killing practices were, and to a degree still are, a division of Tibetan/Lamaist state politics.

One should, however, in all fairness mention that, to a lesser degree in the original tantra texts, but therefore all the more frequently in the commentaries, every arbitrary use of power and violence is explicitly prohibited by the Bodhisattva oath (to act only in the interests of all suffering beings). There is no tantra, no ceremony and no prayer in which it is not repeatedly affirmed that all magic may only be performed out of compassion (*karuna*). This constant, almost suspiciously oft-repeated requirement proves, however, as we shall see, to be a disguise, since violence and power in Tantrism are of a structural and not just a moral nature.

Yet, in light of the power structures of the modern state, the world economy, the military and the modern media, the imaginings of the *Maha Siddhas* sound naive. Their ambitions have something individualist and fantastic about them. But appearances are deceptive. Even in ancient Tibet the employment of magical forces (*siddhis*) was regarded as an important division of Buddhocratic state politics. Ritual magic was far more important than wars or diplomatic activities in the history of official Lamaism, and, as we shall show, it still is.

The tantric concept, that power is transformed erotic love, is also familiar from modern psychoanalysis. It is just that in the Western psyche this transformation is usually, if not always, an unconscious one. According to Sigmund Freud it is repressed erotic love which can become delusions of power. In contrast, in Tantrism this unconscious process is knowingly manipulated and echoed in an almost mechanical experiment. It can — as in the case of Lamaism — define an entire culture. The Dutch psychologist Fokke Sierksma, for instance, assumes that the “lust of power” operates as an essential driving force behind Tibetan monastic life. A monk might pretend, according to this author, to meditate upon how a state of emptiness may be realized, but “in practice the result was not voidness but inflation of the ego”. For the monk it is a matter of “spiritual power not mystic release” (Sierksma, 1966, pp. 125, 186).

But even more astonishing than the magical/tantric world of ancient Tibet is the fact that the phantasmagora of Tantrism have managed in the present day to penetrate the cultural consciousness of our Western, highly industrialized civilization, and that they have had the power to successfully anchor themselves there with all their attendant atavisms. This attempt by *Vajrayana* to conquer the West with its magic practices is the central subject of our study.

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### Footnotes:

[1] The first known Tantric Buddhist document, the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*, dates from the 4th century at the earliest. Numerous other works then follow, which all display the same basic pattern, however. The formative process ended with the *Kalachakra Tantra* no later than the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

[2] A conference was held in Berkeley (USA) in 1987 at which discussion centered primarily on the term *upaya*.

[3] This cultural integration of the tantric divinities is generally denied by the lamas. Tirelessly, they reassure their listeners that it is a matter of universally applicable archetypes, to whom anybody, of whatever religion, can look up. It is true that the *Shunyata* doctrine, the “Doctrine of Emptiness”, makes it theoretically possible to also summon up and then dismiss the deities of other cultures. “Modern” gurus like Chögyam Trungpa, who died in 1989, also refer to the total archetypal reservoir of humankind in their teachings. But in their spiritual praxis they rely exclusively upon tantric and Tibetan symbols, *yiddams* and rites.

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### 3. THE TANTRIC FEMALE SACRIFICE

Until now we have only examined the tantric scheme very broadly and abstractly. But we now wish to show concretely how the “transformation of erotic love into power” is carried out. We thus return to the starting point, the love-play between yogi and yogini, god and goddess, and first examine the various feminine typologies which the tantric master uses in his rituals. *Vajrayana* distinguishes three types of woman in all:

1. The “real woman” (*karma mudra*). She is a real human partner. According to tantric doctrine she belongs to the “realm of desire”.
2. The “imaginary woman” or “spirit woman” (*inana mudra*). She is summonsed by the yogi’s meditative imagination and only exists there or in his fantasy. The *inana mudra* is placed in the “realm of forms”.
3. The “inner woman” (*maha mudra*). She is the woman internalized via the tantric praxis, with no existence independent of the yogi. She is not even credited with the reality of an imagined form, therefore she counts as a figure from the “formless realm”.

All three types of woman are termed *mudra*. This word originally meant ‘seal’, ‘stamp’, or ‘letter of the alphabet’. It further indicated certain magical hand gestures and body postures, with which the yogi conducted, controlled and “sealed” the divine energies. This semantic richness has led to all manner of speculation. For example, we read that the tantric master “stamps” the phenomena of the world with happiness, and that as his companion helps him do this, she is known as *mudra* (‘stamp’). More concretely, the *Maha Siddha* Naropa refers to the fact that a tantric partner, in contrast to a normal woman, assists the guru in blocking his ejaculation during the sexual act, and as it were “seals” this, which is of major importance for the performance of the ritual. For this reason she is known as *mudra*, ‘seal’ (Naropa, 1994, p. 81). But the actual meaning probably lies in the following: in *Vajrayana* the feminine itself is “sealed”, that is, spellbound via a magic act, so that it is available to the tantric master in its entirety.

#### The karma mudra: the real woman

What then are the external criteria which a *karma mudra*, a real woman, needs to meet in order to serve a guru as wisdom consort? The *Hevajra Tantra*, for example, describes her in the following words: “She is neither too tall, nor too short, neither quite black nor quite white, but dark like a lotus leaf. Her breath is sweet, and her sweat has a pleasant smell like that of musk. Her *pudenda* gives forth a scent from moment to moment like different kinds of lotuses or like sweet aloe wood. She is calm and resolute, pleasant in speech and altogether delightful” (Snellgrove, 1959, p. 116). At another juncture the same tantra recommends that the guru “take a consort who has a beautiful face, is wide-eyed, is endowed with grace and youth, is dark, courageous, of good family and originates from the female and male fluids” (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 217). Gedün

Chöpel, a famous tantric from the 20th century, draws a distinction between the various regions from which the women come. Girls from Kham province, for example, have soft flesh, lovers from Dzang are well-versed in the erotic techniques, “Kashmiri girls” are to be valued for their smile, and so on (Chöpel, 1992, p. 45).

Sometimes it is also required of the *karma mudra* that as well as being attractive she also possess specialized erotic skills. For example, the *Kalachakra Tantra* recommends training in the sophisticated Indian sexual techniques of the *Kama Sutra*. In this famous handbook on the intensification of sexual lust, the reader can inform him- or herself about the most daring positions, the use of aphrodisiacs, the anatomical advantages various women possess, the seduction of young girls, dealings with courtesans, and much more. The sole intention of the *Kama Sutra*, however, is to sexualize life as a whole. In contrast to the tantras there are no religious and power-political intentions to be found behind this work. It thus has no intrinsic value for the tantric yogi. The latter uses it purely as a source of inspiration, to stimulate his desires which he then brings under conscious control.

Youth is a further requirement which the *mudra* has to meet. The *Maha Siddha* Saraha distinguishes five different wisdom consorts on the basis of age: the eight-year-old virgin (*kumari*); the twelve-year-old *salika*; the sixteen-year-old *siddha*, who already bleeds monthly; the twenty-year-old *balika*, and the twenty-five-year-old *bhadrakapalini*, who he describes as the “burned fat of prajna” (Wayman, 1973, p. 196). The “modern” tantric already mentioned, Lama Gedün Chöpel, explicitly warns that children can become injured during the sexual act: “Forcibly doing it with a young girl produces severe pains and wounds her genitalia. ... If it is not the time and if copulating would be dangerous for her, churn about between her thighs, and it [the female seed] will come out” (Chöpel, 1992, p. 135). In addition he recommends feeding a twelve-year-old honey and sweets before ritual sexual intercourse (Chöpel, 1992, p. 177).

When the king and later *Maha Siddha*, Dombipa, one day noticed the beautiful daughter of a traveling singer before his palace, he selected her as his wisdom consort and bought her from her father for an enormous sum in gold. She was “an innocent virgin, untainted by the sordid world about her. She was utterly charming, with a fair complexion and classical features. She had all the qualities of a *padmini*, a lotus child, the rarest and most desirable of all girls” (Dowman, 1985, pp. 53–54). What became of the “lotus child” after the ritual is not recorded.

“In the rite of ‘virgin-worship’ (*kumari-puja*)”, writes Benjamin Walker, “a girl is selected and trained for initiation, and innocent of her impending fate is brought before the altar and worshipped in the nude, and then deflowered by a guru or chela” (Walker, 1982, p. 72). It was not just the Hindu tantrics who practiced rituals with a *kumari*, but also the Tibetans, in any case the Grand Abbot of the Sakyapa Sect, even though he was married.

On a numerological basis twelve- or sixteen-year-old girls are preferred. Only when none can be found does Tsongkhapa recommend the use of a twenty-year-old. There is also a table of correspondences between the various ages and the elements and senses: an 11-year-old represents the air, a 12-year-old fire, a 13-year-old water, a 14-year-old earth, a 15-year-old sound, a 16-year-old the sense of touch, a 17-year-old taste, an 18-year-old shape or form, and a 20-year-old the sense of smell (Naropa, 1994, p. 189).

The rituals should not be performed with women older than this, as they absorb the “occult forces” of the guru. The dangers associated with older *mudras* are a topic discussed at length. A famous tantric commentator describes 21- to 30-year-olds as “goddesses of wrath” and gives them the following names: The Blackest, the Fattest, the Greedy, the Most Arrogant, the Stringent, the Flashing, the Grudging, the Iron Chain, and the Terrible Eye. 31- to 38-year-olds are considered to be manifestations of malignant spirits and 39- to 46-year-olds as “unlimited manifestations of the demons”. They are called Dog Snout, Sucking Gob, Jackal Face, Tiger Gullet, Garuda Mug, Owl Features, Vulture’s Beak, Pecking Crow (Naropa, 1994, p. 189). These women, according to the text, shriek and scold, menace and curse. In order to get the yogi completely off balance, one of these terrible figures calls out to him in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, “Human beast, you are to be crushed today”. Then she gnashes her teeth and hisses, “Today I must devour your flesh”, and with trembling tongue she continues, “From your body I will make the drink of blood” (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, p. 191). That some radical tantras view it as especially productive to copulate with such female “monsters” is a topic to which we shall later return.

How does the yogi find a real, human *mudra*? Normally, she is delivered by his pupil. This is also true for the *Kalachakra Tantra*. “If one gives the enlightened teacher the *prajna* [*mudra*] as a gift,” proclaims Naropa, “the yoga is bliss” (Grünwedel, 1933, p. 117). If a 12- or 16-year-old girl cannot be found, a 20-year-old will suffice, advises another text, and continues, “One should offer his sister, daughter or wife to the ‘guru’”, then the more valuable the *mudra* is to the pupil, the more she serves as a gift for his master (Wayman, 1977, p. 320).

Further, magic spells are taught with which to summons a partner. The *Hevajra Tantra* recommends the following mantra: “*Om Hri* — may she come into my power — *savaha!*” (Snellgrove, 1959, p. 54). Once the yogi has repeated this saying ten thousand times the *mudra* will appear before him in flesh and blood and obeys his wishes.

The *Kalachakra Tantra* urges the yogi to render the *mudra* pliant with intoxicating liquor: “Wine is essential for the wisdom consort [*prajna*]. ... Any *mudra* at all, even those who are still not willing, can be procured with drink” (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, p. 147). It is only a small step from this to the use of direct force. There are also texts, which advise “that if a woman refuses sexual union she must be forced to do so” (Bhattacharyya, 1982, p. 125).

Whether or not a *karma mudra* needs special training before the ritual is something which receives varying answers in the texts and commentaries. In general, she should be familiar with the tantric doctrine. Tsongkhapa advises that she take and keep a vow of silence. He expressly warns against intercourse with unworthy partners: "If a woman lacks ... superlative qualities, that is an inferior lotus. Do not stay with that one, because she is full of negative qualities. Make an offering and show some respect, but don't practice (with her)" (quoted in Shaw, 1994, p. 169). In the *Hevajra Tantra* a one-month preparation time is required, then "the girl [is] freed of all false ideas and received as though she were a boon" (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 261).

But what happens to the "boon" once the ritual is over? "The *karma mudra* ... has a purely pragmatic and instrumental significance and is superfluous at the finish" writes the Italian Tibetologist Raniero Gnoli in the introduction to a *Kalachakra* commentary (Naropa, 1994, p. 82). After the sexual act she is "of no more use to the tantrik than husk of a shelled peanut", says Benjamin Walker (Walker, 1982, pp. 72–73). She has done her duty, transferred her feminine energy to the yogi, and now succumbs to the disdain which Buddhism holds for all "normal" women as symbols of the "supreme illusion" (*maha maya*). There is no mention of an initiation of the female partner in the codified Buddhist tantra texts.

### *The karma mudra and the West*

Since the general public demands that a Tibetan lama lead the life of a celibate monk, he must keep his sexual practices secret. For this reason, documents about and verbal accounts of clerical erotic love are extremely rare. It is true that the sexual magic rites are freely and openly discussed in the tantra texts, but who does what with whom and where are all "top secret". Only the immediate followers are informed, the English author June Campbell reports.

And she has the authority to make such a claim. Campbell had been working for many years as translator and personal assistant for the highest ranking Kagyüpa guru, His Holiness Kalu Rinpoche (1905–1989), when the old man (he was then approaching his eighties) one day asked her to become his *mudra*. She was completely surprised by this request and could not begin to imagine such a thing, but then, she reluctantly submitted to the wishes of her master. As she eventually managed to escape the tantric magic circle, the previously uninformed public is indebted to her for a number of competent commentaries upon the sexual cabinet politics of modern Lamaism and the psychology of the *karma mudra*.

What then, according to Campbell, are the reasons which motivate Western women to enter into a tantric relationship, and then afterwards keep their experiences with the masters to themselves? First of all, their great respect and deep reverence for the lama, who as a "living Buddha" begins and ritually conducts the liaison. Then, the *karma mudra*, even when she is not publicly acknowledged, enjoys a high status within the small circle of the informed and, temporarily, the rank of a *dakini*, i.e., a tantric goddess. Her intimate relationship with a "holy man" further gives her the feeling that she is herself holy, or at least the opportunity to collect good karma for herself.

Of course, the *mudra* must swear a strict vow of absolute silence regarding her relations with the tantric master. Should she break it, then according to the tantric penal code she may expect major difficulties, insanity, death and on top of this millennia of hellish torments. In order to intimidate her, Kalu Rinpoche is alleged to have told his *mudra*, June Campbell, that in an earlier life he killed a woman with a mantra because she disobeyed him and gossiped about intimacies. "The imposition of secrecy ... in the Tibetan system", Campbell writes, "when it occurred solely as a means to protect status, and where it was reinforced by threats, was a powerful weapon in keeping women from achieving any kind of integrity in themselves. ... So whilst the lineage system [the gurus' chain of initiation] viewed these [sexual] activities as promoting the enlightenment state of the lineage holders, the fate of one of the two main protagonists, the female consort, remained unrecognized, unspoken and unnamed" (June Campbell, 1996, p. 103). June Campbell also first risked speaking openly about her experiences, which she found repressive and degrading, after Kalu Rinpoche had died.

In her book, this author laments not just the subsequent namelessness of and disregard for the *karma mudra* despite the guru praising her as a "goddess" for as long as the ritual lasted, but also discusses the traumatic state of "used up" women, who, once their master has "drunk" their *gynergy*, are traded in for a "fresh" *mudra*. She also makes reference to the naiveté of Western husbands, who send their spouses to a guru in good faith, so that they can complete their spiritual development. (June Campbell, 1996, p. 107). During her relationship with Kalu Rinpoche he was also practicing with another woman who was not yet twenty years old. The girl died suddenly, of a heart attack it was said. We will return to this death, which fits the logic of the tantric pattern, at a later stage. The fears which such events awakened in her, reports Campbell, completely cut her off from the outside world and left her totally delivered up to the domination of her guru.

This masculine arrogance becomes particularly obvious in a statement by the young lama, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, who announced the following in response to Campbell's commotion stirring book: "If Western women begin sexual relationships with Tibetan lamas, then the consequence for a number of them is frustration, because their culturally conditioned expectations are not met. If they hope to find an agreeable and equal lover in a Rinpoche, they could not be making a bigger mistake. Certain Rinpoches, who are revered as great teachers, would literally make the worst partners of all — seen from the point of view of the ego. If one approaches such a great master expecting to be acknowledged, and wishing for a relationship in which one shares, satisfies one another, etc., then one is making a bad choice — not just from the ego's point of view, but also in a completely normal, worldly sense. They probably won't bring them flowers or invite them to candlelight dinners" (*Esoterica*, 12/97, p. 45; retranslation). It speaks for such a quotation that it is honest, since it quite plainly acknowledges the spiritual inferiority of women (who represent the ego, desire and banality) when confronted with the superhuman spiritual authority of the male gurus. The tantric master Khyentse Rinpoche knows exactly what he is talking about, when he continues with the following sentence: "Whilst in the West one understands equality to mean that two aspects find a common denominator, in *Vajrayana* Buddhism equality lies completely outside of twoness or duality. Where duality is retained, there can be no equality" (*Esoterica*, 12/97, p. 46; retranslation). That is, in other words: the woman as

equal and autonomous partner must be eliminated and has to surrender her energies to the master's completion (beyond duality).

"Sexual abuse" of Western women by Tibetan lamas has meanwhile become something of a constant topic in the Buddhist scene and has also triggered heated discussion on the Internet. "Sexual abuse" of Western women by Tibetan lamas has meanwhile become something of a constant topic in the Buddhist scene and has also triggered heated discussion on the Internet. See: [www.trimondi.de/EN/links.htm#SEXABUSE](http://www.trimondi.de/EN/links.htm#SEXABUSE)

Even the official office of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has had to respond to the increasingly common allegations: "What some of these students have experienced is terrible and most unfortunate", announced Tenzin Tethon, a secretary to His Holiness, and admitted that for a number of years there had already been reports of such incidents (Lattin, Newsgroup 2). Naturally, Tenzin Tethon made no mention of the fact that the sexual exploitation of women for spiritual purposes forms the heart of the tantric mystery.

But there are more and more examples where women are beginning to defend themselves. Thus, in 1992 the well-known bestseller author and commentator on the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, Sogyal Rinpoche, had to face the Supreme Court of Santa Cruz, alleged to have "used his position as an interpreter of Tibetan Buddhism to take sexual and other advantage of female students over a period of many years" (*Tricycle* 1996, vol. 5 no. 4, p. 87). The plaintiff was seeking 10 million dollars. It was claimed Sogyal Rinpoche had assured his numerous partners that it would be extremely salutary and spiritually rewarding to sleep with him. Another *mudra*, Victoria Barlow from New York City, described in an interview with *Free Press* how she, at the age of 21, was summoned into Sogyal Rinpoche's room during a meditative retreats: "I went to an apartment to see a highly esteemed lama and discuss religion. He opened the door without a shirt on and with a beer in his hand". When they were sitting on the sofa, the Tibetan "lunged at me with sloppy kisses and groping. I thought [then] I should take it as the deepest compliment that he was interested and basically surrender to him". Today, Barlow says that she is "disgusted by the way the Tibetans have manipulated the reverence westerners have for the Buddhist path" (Lattin, Newsgroup 2). The case mentioned above was, however, settled out of court; the result, according to Sogyal's followers, of their master's deep meditation.

It would normally be correct to dismiss such "sex stories" as superfluous gossip and disregard them. In the occult logic of *Vajrayana*, however, they need to be seen as strategically placed ritual practices designed to bring the guru power and influence. Perhaps they additionally have something to do with the Buddhist conquest of the West, which is symbolized by various *mudras*. Such conjectures may sound rather bizarre, but in Tantrism we are confronted with a different logic to that to which we are accustomed. Here, sexual events are not uncommonly globalized and capable of influencing all of humankind. We shall return to this point.

But at least such examples show that Tibet's "celibate" monks "practice" with real women — a fact about which the Tibetan clergy including the Fourteenth Dalai Lama have deceived the West until now. Because more and more "wisdom consorts" are breaking their oath to secrecy, it is only now that the conditions are being created for a public discussion of the tantric rituals as such. The criticism to date has not gone beyond a moral-feminist discourse and in no case known to us (with the exception of some of June Campbell's statements) has it extended to the occult exploitative mechanism of *Vajrayana*.

On the other hand, the fact that the sexual needs of the lamas can no longer be covered up, has, in a type of advance strategy, led to a situation in which their "spiritual" work with *karma mudras* is presentable as something to be taken for granted, and which is not inherently shocking. "Many Rinpoches", one Christopher Fynn has written on the Internet, "including Jattral Rinpoche, Dzongsar Khyentse, Dilgo Khyentse and Ongen Tulku have consorts — which everyone knew about" (Fynn, Newsgroup 4).

And the Dalai Lama, himself the Highest Master of the sexual magic rites, raises the moral finger: "In recent years, teachers from Asia and the West have been involved in scandals about sexual misbehavior towards male and female pupils, the abuse of alcohol and drugs, and the misuse of money and power. This behavior has caused great damage to the Buddhist community and individual people. Pupils of both sexes should be encouraged to confront teachers with unethical aspects of their behavior in an appropriate manner" (*Esotera*, 12/97, p. 45; retranslation). What should be made of such requests by His Holiness, which are also silent about the sexist mechanisms of Tantrism is a topic which we explore in detail in the second part of our study.

Following these up-to-date "revelations" about Western *karma mudras*, let us return to our presentation of the tantric scenario as described in the traditional texts.

### **The inana mudra: the woman of imagination**

In contrast to the *real karma mudra*, the *inana mudra* is a purely *spiritual* figure, who appears as a goddess, the wisdom consort of various Buddhas, or as a "dakini". She is the product of the imagination. But we must keep in mind that the *inana mudra* may never be a random fantasy of the guru, rather, her external appearance, the color of her hair, her clothing, her jewelry and the symbols which surround her, are all codified. Thus, in his imagination the tantric copies an image which is already recorded in the Buddhist pantheon. In this regard the cult of *inana mudra* worship has much in common with Christian mysticism surrounding Sophia and Mary and has therefore often been compared with, for example, the *mater gloriosa* at the end of Goethe's *Faust*, where the reformed alchemist rapturously cries:

***Highest mistress of the world!***

***Let me in the azure***

***Tent of Heaven, in light unfurled***

***Hear thy Mystery measure!***

***Justify sweet thoughts that move***

***Breast of man to meet thee!***

***And with holy bliss of love***

***Bear him up to greet thee!***

**(Faust II, 11997–12004)**

Here, “the German poet Goethe ... unsuspectingly voices expresses the Buddhist awareness of the Jñānamudrā [*inana mudra*]” notes Herbert Guenther, who has attempted in a number of writings to interpret the tantras from the viewpoint of a European philosopher (Guenther, 1976, p. 74).

It should however be noted that such Western sublimations of the feminine only correspond to a degree with the imaginings of Indian and Tibetan tantrics. There, it is not just noble and ethereal virgins who are conjured up in the yogis’ imaginations, but also sensuous “dakinis” trembling with lust, who not uncommonly appear as figures of horror, goddesses with bowls made of skulls and cleavers in their hands.

But whatever sort of a woman the adept imagines, in all events he will unite sexually with this spiritual being during the ritual. The white and refined “Sophias” from the realm of the imagination are not exempted from the ritual sexual act. “Among the last phases of the tantrik’s progress”, Benjamin Walker tells us, “is sexual union on the astral plane, when he invokes elemental spirits, fiendesses and the spirits of the dead, and has intercourse with them” (Walker, 1982, p. 74).

Since the yogi produces his wisdom companion through the imaginative power of his spirit, he can rightly consider himself her spiritual father. The *inana mudra* is composed of the substance of his own thoughts. She thus does not consist of matter, but — and this is very important — she nonetheless appears outside of her imagination-father and initially encounters him as an autonomous subject. He thus experiences her as a being who admittedly has him alone to thank

for her being, but who nevertheless has a life of her own, like a child, separated from its mother once it is born.

In all, the tantras distinguish two “types of birth” for imagined female partners: firstly, the “women produced by spells”; secondly, the “field-born yoginis”. In both cases we are dealing with so-called “feminine energy fields” or feminine archetypes which the tantric master can through his imaginative powers render visible for him as “illusory bodies”. This usually takes place via a deep meditation in which the yogi visualizes the *inana mudra* with his “spiritual eye” (Wayman, 1973, pp. 193–195).

As a master of unbounded imagination, the yogi is seldom content with a single *inana mudra*, and instead creates several female beings from out of his spirit, either one after another or simultaneously. The *Kalachakra Tantra* describes how the imagined “goddesses” spring from various parts of his body, from out of his head, his forehead, his neck, his heart and his navel. He can conjure up the most diverse entities in the form of women, such as elements, planets, energies, forces and emotions — compassion for example: “as the incarnation of this arises in his heart a golden glowing woman wearing a white robe. ... Then this woman steps ... out of his heart, spreads herself out to the heaven of the gods like a cloud and lets down a rain of nourishment as an antidote for all bodily suffering” (Gäng, 1988, p. 44).

### Karma mudra vs. inana mudra

In the tantric literature we find an endless discussion about whether the magical sexual act with a *karma mudra* of flesh and blood must be valued more highly than that with an imagined *inana mudra*. For example, Herbert Guenther devotes a number of pages to this debate in his existentialist study of *Vajrayana*. Although he also reports in detail about the “pro-woman” intentions of the tantras, he comes to the surprising conclusion that we have in the *karma mudra* a woman “who yields pleasure containing the seed of frustration”, whilst the *inana mudra* is “a woman who yields a purer, though unstable, pleasure” (Guenther, 1976, p. 57).

As a product of the PURE SPIRIT, he classes the *inana mudra* above a living woman. She “is a creation of one’s own mind. She is of the nature of the Great Mother or other goddesses and comprises all that has been previously experienced” (Guenther, 1976, p. 72, quoting Naropa). But she too finally goes the way of all life and “therefore also, even love, Jñānamudrā [*inana mudra*], gives us merely a fleeting sense of bliss, although this feeling is of a higher, and hence more positive, order than the Karmamūdra [*karma mudra*] who makes us ‘sad’...” (Guenther, 1976, p. 75).

On the other hand there are very weighty arguments for the greater importance of a real woman (*karma mudra*) in the tantric rite of initiation. Then the purpose of the ritual with her is the final transcending of the real external world of appearance (*maya*) and the creation of a universe which functions solely according to the will and imagination of the tantric master. His first task is therefore to recognize the illusory character of reality as a whole. This is naturally represented more graphically, tangibly, and factually by a woman of flesh and blood than by a fictive construction of the own spirit, which the *inana mudra* is. She appears from the outset as the product of an illusion.

A *karma mudra* thus presents an exceptionally difficult challenge to the spiritual abilities of the adept, since the *real* human woman must also be recognized as an illusion (*maya*)! This means, in the final instance, nothing less than that the yogi no longer grants the entire physical world, which in Indian tradition concentrates itself in the form of a woman, an independent existence, and that as a consequence he recognizes matter as a conceit of his own consciousness. He thereby frees himself from all restrictions imposed by the laws of nature. Such a radical dissolution of reality is believed to accelerate several times the initiation process which otherwise takes numerous incarnations.

Especially if “enlightenment” and liberation from the constraints of reality is to be achieved in a single lifetime, it is necessary in the opinion of many tantra commentators to practice with a human *mudra*. In the *Cakrasamvara Tantra* we read for example, that “the secret path without a consort will not grant perfection to beings” (quoted by Shaw, 1994, p. 142). Tsongkhapa, founder of the Tibetan Gelugpa sect is of the same opinion: “A female companion is the basis of the accomplishment of liberation” (quoted by Shaw, 1994, p. 146). Imagined women are only recommendable for less qualified individuals, or may serve at the beginning of the ritual path as a preliminary exercise, reports Miranda Shaw, who makes reference to modern Gelugpa Masters like Lama Yeshe, Geshe Kelsang Gyatso and Geshe Dhargyey (Shaw, 1994, pp. 146, 244, notes 26, 27, 29).

A further reason for the use of a *karma mudra* can be seen in the fact that for his magical transformations the yogi needs a secretion which the woman expresses during the sexual act and which is referred to as “female seed” in the texts. It is considered a bodily concentrate of *gynergy*. This coveted vaginal fluid will later be the subject of a detailed discussion.

### **The maha mudra: the inner woman**

During the tantric ritual the *karma mudra* must therefore be recognized by the yogi as an illusion. This is of course also true of the *inana mudra*, since the tantric master as an autonomous being has to transcend both forms of the feminine, the real and the imagined. We have already learned from Herbert Guenther that the “spirit woman” is also of fleeting character and prone to transitoriness. The yogi may not attribute her with an “inherent existence”. At the beginning of every tantric ritual both *mudras* still appear outside of him; the *karma mudra* before his “real” eyes, the *inana mudra* before his “spiritual” eyes.

But does this illusory character of the two types of woman mean that they are dissolved into nothing by the tantric master? As far as their external and autonomous existence is concerned, this is indeed the yogi's conception. He does not accord even the real woman any further inherent existence. When, after the tantric ritual in which she is elevated to a goddess, she before all eyes returns home in visible, physical form, in the eyes of the guru she no longer exists as an independent being, but merely as the product of his imagination, as a conceptual image — even when a normal person perceives the girl as a being of flesh and blood.

But although her autonomous feminine existence has been dissolved, her feminine essence (*gynergy*) has not been lost. Via an act of sexual magic the yogi has appropriated this and with it achieved the power of an androgyne. He destroys, so to speak, the exterior feminine in order to internalize it and produce an “inner woman” as a part of himself. “He absorbs the Mother of the Universe into himself”, as it is described in the *Kalachakra Tantra* (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra IV*, p. 32). At a later stage we will describe in detail the subtle techniques with which he performs this absorption. Here we simply list some of the properties of the “inner woman”, the so-called *maha mudra* (“great” *mudra*). The boundary with the *inana mudra* is not fixed, after all the *maha mudra* is also a product of the imagination. Both types of woman thus have no physical body, and instead transcend “the atomic structure and consist of a purely spiritual substance” (Naropa, 1994, p. 82). But the *inana mudra* still exists outside of the tantric master, the “inner woman”, however, as her name indicates, can no longer be distinguished from him and has become a part of his self. In general, the *maha mudra* is said to reside in the region of the navel. There she dances and acts as an oracle as the Greek goddess *Metis* once did in the belly of *Zeus*. She is the “in-born” and produces the “in-born joy of the body, the in-born joy of language, the in-born joy of the spirit and the in-born joy of consciousness” (Naropa, 1994, p. 204).

The male tantric master now has the power to assume the female form of the goddess (who is of course an aspect of his own mystical body), that is, he can appear in the figure of a woman. Indeed, he even has the magical ability to divide himself into two gendered beings, a female and a male deity. He is further able to multiply himself into several *maha mudras*. In the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*, with the help of magical conjurations he fills an entire palace with female figures, themselves all particles of his subtle body.

Now one might think that for the enlightened yogi the book of sensual pleasures would be closed, since for him there are no more exterior women. But the contrary is the case. His lust is not transformed, but rather made eternal. Thus in his imagination, he is “united day and night [with the *maha mudra*]. The yogi often says, he would not live without her kiss and embrace” (Dasgupta, 1974, p. 102). He is even able to imaginatively stimulate the sexual organs of the inner woman in order to combine her erotic pleasure with his own (he simultaneously enjoys both), and thus immeasurably intensify it. (Farrow and Menon, 1992, pp. 271, 272, 291).

Despite this sexual turbulence he retains a strict awareness of the polarity of the primal cosmic forces, it is just that these are now realized within his own person. He is simultaneously masculine and feminine, and has both sexual energies under his absolute control. He incarnates the entire tantric theater. He is director, actor, audience, plot and stage in one individual.

Such agitated games are, however, just one side of the tantric philosophy, on the other is a concept of eternal standstill of being, linked to the image of the *maha mudra*. She appears as the “Highest Immobile”, who, like a clear, magical mirror, reflects a femininity turned to crystal. An obedient femininity with no will of her own, who complies with the looks, the orders, the desires and fantasies of her master. A female automaton, who wishes for nothing, and blesses the yogi with her divine knowledge and holy wisdom.

Whether mobile or unmoving, erotic or spiritualized — the *maha mudra* is universal. From a tantric viewpoint she incarnates the entire universe. Consequently, whoever has control over his “inner woman” becomes a lord of the universe, a pantocrat. She is a paradox, eternal and indestructible, but nevertheless, like the whole cosmos, without an independent existence. For this reason she is known as a “magical mirror” (Naropa, 1994, p. 81). In the final instance, she represents the “emptiness”.

In Western discussion about the *maha mudra* she is glorified by Lama Govinda (Ernst Lothar Hoffmann) as the “Eternal Feminine” which now counts as part of the yogi’s essential being. (Govinda, 1991, p. 111). According to Govinda she fulfills a role comparable to that of the muse, who up until the 19th century whispered inspiration into the ears of European artists. Muses could also become incarnated as real women, but in the same manner existed as “inner goddesses”, known then under the name of “inspiration”.

The Buddhist doctrine of the *maha mudra* has also been compared with Carl Gustav Jung’s concept of *anima* (Katz 1977). Jung proposed that the human soul of a man is double gendered, it has a masculine and a feminine part, the *animus* and the *anima*. In a woman the reverse is true. Her feminine *anima* corresponds to a masculine *animus*. With some qualifications, the depth psychologist was convinced that the other-gendered part of the soul could originally be found in the psyche of every person. Jung thus assumes the human soul possesses a primary androgyny, or gynandry, respectively. The goal of an integrated psychology is that the individual recognize his or her other-gendered half and bring the two parts of the soul into harmony.

Even if we attribute the same intentions to Tantrism, an essential difference remains. This is, as all the relevant texts claim, that the feminine side of the yogi is initially found outside himself — whether in the form of a real woman or the figure of an imaginary one — and must first be integrated through sacred sexual practices. If — as in Jung — the *anima* were to be found in the “mystic body” of the tantric master from the start, then he would surely be able to activate his

feminine side without needing to use an external *mudra*. If he could, then all the higher and highest initiations into *Vajrayana* would be redundant, since they always describe the “inner woman” as the result of a process which begins with an “exterior woman”.

It is tempting to conclude that a causal relation exists between both female tantric “partners”, the internal and the external. The tantric master uses a human woman, or at least an *inana mudra* to create his androgynous body. He destroys her autonomous existence, steals her *gynergy*, integrates this in the form of an “inner woman” and thus becomes a powerful double-gendered super-being. We can, hypothetically, describe the process as follows: the sacrifice of the exterior woman is the precondition for the establishment of the inner *maha mudra*.

### The “tantric female sacrifice”

But are we really justified in speaking of a “tantric female sacrifice”? We shall attempt to find an answer to this difficult question. Fundamentally, the Buddhist tantric distinguishes three types of sacrifice: the outer, the inner and the secret. The “outer sacrifice” consists of the offering to a divinity, the Buddhas, or the guru, of food, incense, butter lamps, perfume, and so on. For instance in the so-called “mandala sacrifice” the whole universe can be presented to the teacher, in the form of a miniature model, whilst the pupil says the following. “I sacrifice all the components of the universe in their totality to you, O noble, kind, and holy lama!” (Bleichsteiner, 1937, p. 192)

In the “inner sacrifice” the pupil (*Sadhaka*) gives his guru, usually in a symbolic act, his five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch), his states of consciousness, and his feelings, or he offers himself as an individual up to be sacrificed. Whatever the master demands of him will be done — even if the *sadhaka* must cut the flesh from his own limbs, like the tantric adept Naropa.

Behind the “secret sacrifice” hides, finally, a particular ritual event which attracts our especial interest, since it is here that the location of the “tantric female sacrifice” is to be suspected. It concerns — as can be read in a modern commentary upon the *Kalachakra Tantra* — “the spiritual sacrifice of a *dakini* to the lama” (Henss, 1985, p. 56). Such symbolic sacrifices of goddesses are all but stereotypical of tantric ceremonies. “The exquisite bejeweled woman ... is offered to the Buddhas” (Gäng, 1988, p. 151), as the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* puts it. Often eight, sometimes sixteen, occasionally countless “wisdom girls” are offered up in “the holy most secret of offerings” (quoted by Beyer, 1978, p. 162)

### The sacrifice of samsara

A sacrifice of the feminine need not be first sought in Tantrism, however; rather it may be found in the logic of the entire Buddhist doctrine. Woman *per se*— as Buddha Shakyamuni repeatedly

emphasized in many of his statements — functions as the first and greatest cause of illusion (*maya*), but likewise as the force which generates the phenomenal world (*samsara*). It is the fundamental goal of every Buddhist to overcome this deceptive *samsara*. This world of appearances experienced as feminine, presents him with his greatest challenge. “A woman”, Nancy Auer Falk writes, “was the veritable image of becoming and of all the forces of blind growth and productivity which Buddhism knew as Samsara. As such she too was the enemy — not only on a personal level, as an individual source of temptation, but also on a cosmic level” (Gross, 1993, p. 48). In this misogynist logic, it is only after the ritual destruction of the feminine that the illusory world (*maya*) can be surmounted and transcended.

Is it for this reason that *maya* (illusion), the mother of the historical Buddha, had to die directly after giving birth? In her early death we can recognize the original event which stands at the beginning of the fundamentally misogynist attitude of all Buddhist schools. *Maya* both conceived and gave birth to the Sublime One in a supernatural manner. It was not a sexual act but an elephant which, in a dream, occasioned the conception, and Buddha Shakyamuni did not leave his mother’s body through the birth canal, but rather through her hip. But these transfeminine birth myths were not enough for the tellers of legends. *Maya* as earthly mother had, on the path to enlightenment of a religion which seeks to free humanity from the endless chain of reincarnation, to be proclaimed an “illusion” (*maya*) and destroyed. She receives no higher accolade in the school of Buddha, since the woman — as mother and as lover — is the curse which fetters us to our illusory existence.

Already in *Mahayana* Buddhism, the naked corpse of a woman was considered as the most provocative and effective meditation object an initiate could use to free himself from the net of *Samsara*. Inscribed in the iconography of her body were all the vanities of this world. For this reason, he who sank bowed over a decaying female body could achieve enlightenment in his current life. To increase the intensity of the macabre observation, it was usual in several Indian monastic orders to dismember the corpse. Ears, nose, hands, feet, and breasts were chopped off and the disfigured trunk became the object of contemplation. “In Buddhist context, the spectacle of the mutilated woman serves to display the power of the Buddha, the king of the Truth (Dharma) over Mara, the lord of the Realm of Desire.”, writes Elizabeth Wilson in a discussion of such practices, “By erasing the sexual messages conveyed by the bodies of attractive women through the horrific spectacle of mutilation, the superior power of the king of Dharma is made manifest to the citizens of the realm of desire.” (Wilson, 1995, p. 80).

In *Vajrayana*, the *Shunyata* doctrine (among others) of the nonexistence of all being, is employed to conduct a symbolic sacrifice of the feminine principle. Only once this has evaporated into a “nothing” can the world and we humans be rescued from the curse of *maya* (illusion). This may also be a reason why the “emptiness” (*shunyata*), which actually by definition can not possess any characteristics, is hypostasized as feminine in the tantras. This becomes especially clear in the *Hevajra Tantra*. In staging of the ritual we encounter at the outset a real yogini (*karma mudra*) or at least an imagined goddess (*inana mudra*), whom the yogi transforms in the course of events into a “nothing” using magic techniques. By the end the tantric master has completely robbed her of her independent existence, that is, to put it bluntly, she no longer exists. “She is the Yogini

without a Self” (Farrow and Menon, 1992, pp. 218–219). Thus her name, *Nairatmya*, literally means ‘one who has no self, that is, non-substantial’ (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 219). The same concept is at work when, in another tantra, the “ultimate dakini” is visualized as a “zero-point” and experienced as “indivisible pleasure and emptiness” (Dowman, 1985, p. 74). Chögyam Trungpa sings of the highest “lady without being” in the following verses:

*Always present, you do not exist ...*

*Without body, shapeless, divinity of the true.*

(Trungpa, 1990, p. 40)

Only her bodilessness, her existential sacrifice and her dissolution into nothing allow the *karma mudra* to transmute into the *maha mudra* and gynergy to be distilled out of the yogini in order to construct the feminine ego of the adept with this “stuff”. “Relinquishing her form [as] a woman, she would assume that of her Lord” the *Hevajra Tantra* establishes at another point (Snellgrove, 1959, p. 91).

The *maha mudra* has, it is said, an “empty body” (Dalai Lama I, 1985, p. 170). What can be understood by this contradictory metaphor? In his commentary on the *Kalachakra Tantra*, Ngawang Dhargyey describes how the “empty body” can only be produced through the destruction of all the “material” elements of a physical, natural “body of appearance”. In contrast to such, “their bodies are composed simply of energy and consciousness” (Dhargyey, 1985, p. 131). The physical world, sensuality, matter and nature — considered feminine in not just Buddhism — thus become pure spirit in an irreconcilable opposition. But they are not completely destroyed in the process of their violent spiritualization, but rather “sublated” in the Hegelian sense, namely “negated” and “conserved” at the same time; they are — to make use of one of the favorite terms of the Buddhist evolutionary theorist, Ken Wilber — “integrated”. This guarantees that the creative feminine energies are not lost following the material “dissolution” of their bearers, and instead are available solely to the yogi as a precious elixir. A sacrifice of the feminine as an autonomous principle must therefore be regarded as the *sine qua non* for the universal power of the tantric master. These days this feminine sacrifice may only be performed entirely in the imagination. But this need not have always been the case.

### *“Eating” the gynergy*

But *Vajrayana* is concerned with more than the performance of a cosmic drama in which the feminine and its qualities are destroyed for metaphysical reasons. The tantric recognizes a majority of the feminine properties as extremely powerful. He therefore has not the slightest intention of destroying them as such. In contrast, he wishes to make the feminine forces his own. What he wants to destroy is solely the physical and mental bearer of *gynergy* — the real woman. For this reason, the “tantric female sacrifice” is of a different character to the cosmogonic sacrifice

of the feminine of early Buddhism. It is based upon the ancient paradigm in which the energies of a creature are transferred to its killer. The maker of the sacrifice wants to absorb the vital substance of the offering, in many cases by consuming it after it has been slaughtered. Through this he not only “integrates” the qualities of the killed, but also believes he may outwit death, by feeding up on the body and soul of the sacrificial victim.

In this connection the observation that world wide the sacred sacrifice is contextually linked with food and eating, is of some interest. It is necessary to kill plants and animals in order to nourish oneself. The things killed are subsequently consumed and thus appear as a necessary condition for the maintenance and propagation of life. Eating increases strength, therefore it was important to literally incorporate the enemy. In cannibalism, the eater integrates the energies of those he has slaughtered. Since ancient humans made no basic distinction between physical, mental or spiritual processes, the same logic applied to the “eating” of nonbodily forces. One also ate souls, or *prana*, or the *élan vital*.

In the *Vedas*, this general “devouring logic” led to the conception that the gods nourished themselves from the life fluids of ritually slaughtered humans, just as mortals consume the bodies of animals for energy and nourishment. Thus, a critical-rational section of the *Upanishads* advises against such human sacrifices, since they do not advance individual enlightenment, but rather benefit only the blood-hungry supernatural beings.

Life and death imply one another in this logic, the one being a condition for the other. The whole circle of life was therefore a huge sacrificial feast, consisting of the mutual theft and absorption of energies, a great cosmic dog-eat-dog. Although early Buddhism gave vent to keen criticism of the Vedic rites, especially the slaughter of people and animals, the ancient sacrificial mindset resurfaces in tantric ritual life. The “devouring logic” of the *Vedas* also controls the *Tantrayana*. Incidentally, the word *tantra* is first found in the context of the Vedic sacrificial gnosis, where it means ‘sacrificial framework’ (Smith, 1989, p. 128).

Sacred cannibalism was always communion, holy union with the Spirit and the souls of the dead. It becomes Eucharistic communion when the sacrifice is a slaughtered god, whose followers eat of him at a supper. God and man are first one when the man or woman has eaten of the holy body and drunk the holy blood of his or her god. The same applies in the relation to the goddess. The tantric yogi unites with her not just in the sexual act, but above all through consuming her holy *gynergy*, the magical force of *maya*. Sometimes, as we shall see, he therefore drinks his partner’s menstrual blood. Only when the feminine blood also pulses in his own veins will he be *complete*, an androgyne, a lord of both sexes.

To gain the “*gynergy*” for himself, the yogi must “kill” the possessor of the vital feminine substances and then “incorporate” her. Such an act of violence does not necessarily imply the

real murder of his *mudra*, it can also be performed symbolically. But a real ritual murder of a woman is by like measure not precluded, and it is not surprising that occasional references can be found in the *Vajrayana* texts which blatantly and unscrupulously demand the actual killing of a woman. In a commentary on the *Hevajra Tantra*, at a point where a lower-caste wisdom consort (*dombi*) is being addressed, stands bluntly, "I kill you, o *Dombi*, I take your life!" (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 159).

### *Sati or the sacred inaugural sacrifice*

In any case, in all the rituals of the Highest Tantra initiations a *symbolic* female sacrifice is set in scene. From numerous case studies in cultural and religious history we are aware that an "archaic first event", an "inaugural sacred murder" may be hiding behind such symbolic stagings. This "original event", in which a real wisdom consort was ritually killed, need in no sense be consciously acknowledged by the following generations and cult participants who only perform the sacrifice in their imaginations or as holy theater. As the French anthropologist René Girard convincingly argues in his essay on *Violence and the Sacred*, the original murderous deed is normally no longer fully recalled during later symbolic performances. But it can also not become totally forgotten. It is important that the violent origin of their sacrificial rite be shrouded in mystery for the cult participant. "To maintain its structural force, the inaugural violence must not make an appearance", claims Girard (Girard, 1987, p. 458). Only thus can the participants experience that particular emotionally laden and ambivalent mixture of crime and mercy, guilt and atonement, violence and satisfaction, shuddering and repression which first lends the numinous aura of holiness to the cult events.

It thus seems appropriate to examine Tantric Buddhism for signs of such an "inaugural sacrifice". In this connection, we would like to draw attention to a Shiva myth, which has nonetheless had an influence on the history of the Buddhist tantras.

In the mythical past, *Sati* was the consort of the god *Shiva*. When her father *Daksa* was planning a great sacrificial feast, he failed to invite his daughter and son-in-law. Unbidden, *Sati* nonetheless attended the feast and was deeply insulted by *Daksa*. Filled with shame and anger she threw herself upon the burning sacrificial altar and died. (In another version of the story she alone was invited and cremated herself when she heard that her spouse was barred from the feast.) *Shiva*, informed of the death of his wife, hurried at once to the scene of the tragedy and decapitated *Daksa*. He then took the body of his beloved *Sati*, laid her across his shoulders and began a funeral procession across all India. The other gods wanted to free him from the corpse and set about dismembering it, piece by piece, without *Shiva* noticing what they were doing.

The places where the fragments fell were destined to become holy sites known as *Shakta pithas*. There where *Sati's* vulva came to land the most sacred location was established. In some texts there is talk of 24, in others of 108 *pithas*, the latter being the holy number of Buddhism. At *Sati's* numerous graves cemeteries were set up forthwith, at which the people cremated their dead.

Around these locations developed a many-sided, and as we shall see, extremely macabre death culture, which was nurtured by Tantrics of all schools (including the Buddhist variety).

In yet another version of the *Sati* legend, the corpse of *Shiva's* wife contained a "small cog — a symbol of manifest time -, [which] destroyed the body of the goddess from the inside out. ... [It] was then dismembered into 84 fragments which fell to earth at the various holy sites of India" (Hutin, 1971, p. 67). This is indeed a remarkable variant on the story, since the number of famous *Maha Siddhas* (Grand Sorcerers), who in both the Buddhist and Hindu tradition introduced Tantrism to India as a new religious practice, is 84. These first Tantrics chose the *Shakta pithas* as the central locations for their rituals. Some of them, the Nath Siddhas, claimed *Sati* had sacrificed herself for them and had given them her blood. For this reason they clothed themselves in red robes (White, 1996, p. 195). Likewise, one of the many Indian cemetery legends tells how five of the *Maha Siddhas* emerged from the cremated corpse of a goddess named *Adinatha* (White, 1996, p. 296). It can be assumed that this is also a further variation on the *Sati* legend.

It is not clear from the tale whether the goddess committed a sacrificial suicide or whether she was the victim of a cruel murder. *Sati's* voluntary leap into the flames seems to indicate the former; her systematic dismemberment the latter. A "criminological" investigation of the case on the basis of the story alone, i.e., without reference to other considerations, is impossible, since the *Sati* legend must itself be regarded as an expression of the mystifying ambivalence which, according to René Girard, veils every inaugural sacrifice. All that is certain is that all of the originally Buddhist (!) *Vajrayana's* significant cult locations were dedicated to the dismembered Hindu *Sati*.

Earlier, however, claims the Indologist D. C. Sircar, famous relics of the "great goddess" were said to be found at the *Shakta pithas*. At the heart of her cult stood the worship of her *yonis* ('vagina') (Sircar, 1973, p. 8). We can only concur with this opinion, yet we must also point out that the majority of the matriarchal cults of which we are aware also exhibited a phallic orientation. Here the phallus did not signalize a symbol of male dominance, but was instead a toy of the "great goddess", with which she could sexual-magically manipulate men and herself obtain pleasure.

We also think it important to note that the practices of Indian gynocentric cults were in no way exempt from sacrificial obsession. In contrast, there is a comprehensive literature which reports the horrible rites performed at the *Shakta pithas* in honor of the goddess *Kali*. Her followers bowed down before her as the "consumer of raw meat", who was constantly hungry for human sacrifices. The individuals dedicated to her were first fed up until they were sufficiently plump to satisfy the goddess's palate. On particular feast days the victims were decapitated in her copper temple (Sircar, 1973, p. 16).

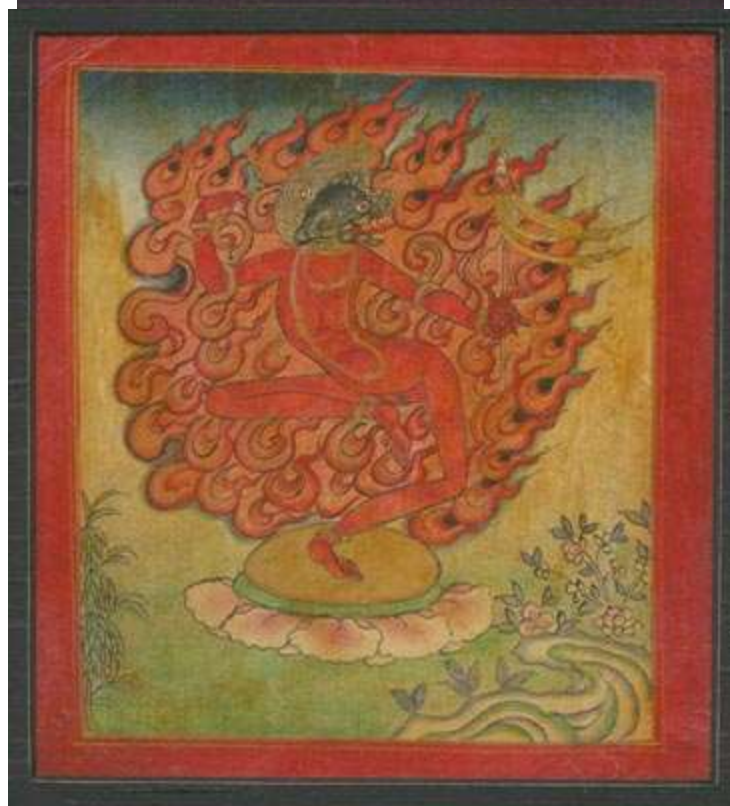
Naturally we can only speculate that the "dismemberment of the goddess" in the *Sati* myth might be a masculine reaction to the original fragmentation of the masculine god by the gynocentric

*Kali*. But this murderous reciprocity must not be seen purely as an act of revenge. In both cases it is a matter of the increased life energy which is to be achieved by the sacrifice of the opposite sex. In so doing, the “revolutionary” androcentric yogis made use of a similar ritual praxis and symbolism to the aggressive female followers of the earlier matriarchy, but with reversed premises. For example, the number 108, so central to Buddhism, is a reminder of the 108 names under which the great goddess was worshipped (Sircar, 1973, p. 25).

### *The fire sacrifice of the dakini*

The special feature of Greek sacrificial rites lay in the combination of burning and eating, of blood rite and fire altar. In pre-Buddhist, Vedic India rituals involving fire were also the most common form of sacrifice. Humans, animals, and plants were offered up to the gods on the altar of flame. Since every sacrifice was supposed to simulate among other things the dismemberment of the first human, *Prajapati*, it always concerned a “symbolic human sacrifice”, even when animal or plant substitutes were used.

At first the early Buddhists adopted a highly critical attitude towards such Vedic practices and rejected them outright, in stark opposition to *Vajrayana* later, in which they were to regain central significance. Even today, *fire pujas* are among the most frequent rituals of Tantric Buddhism. The origin of these Buddhist “flame masses” from the *Vedas* becomes obvious when it is noted that the Vedic fire god *Agni* appears in the *Buddhist* tantras as the “Consumer of Offerings”. This is even true of the Tibetans. In this connection, Helmut von Glasenapp describes one of the final scenes from the large-scale *Kalachakra* ritual, which the Panchen Lama performed in Beijing 1932: A “woodpile was set alight and the fire god invited to take his place in the eight-leafed lotus which stood in the middle of the fireplace. Once he had been offered abundant sacrifices, *Kalachakra* was invited to come hither from his mandala and to become one with the fire god” (von Glasenapp, 1940, p. 142). Thus the time god and the fire unite.





*Burning Dakinis*

The symbolic burning of “sacrificial goddesses” is found in nearly every tantra. It represents every possible characteristic, from the human senses to various states of consciousness. The elements (fire, water, etc.) and individual bodily features are also imagined in the form of a “sacrificial goddesses”. With the pronouncement of a powerful magic formula they all perish in the fire. In what is known as the *Vajrayogini* ritual, the pupil sacrifices several *inana mudras* to a red fire god who rides a goat. The chief goddess, *Vajrayogini*, appears here with “a red-colored body which shines with a brilliance like that of the fire of the aeon” (Gyatso, 1991, p. 443). In the *Guhyasamaya Tantra* the goddesses even fuse together in a fiery ball of light in order to then serve as a sacrifice to the Supreme Buddha. Here the adept also renders malignant women harmless through fire: “One makes the burnt offerings within a triangle. ... If one has done this three days long, concentrating upon the target of the women, then one can thus ward them off, even for the infinity of three eons” (Gāng, 1988, p. 225). A “burning woman” by the name of *Candali* plays such a significant role in the *Kalachakra* initiations that we devote an entire chapter to her later. In this context we also examine the “ignition of feminine energy”, a central event along the sexual magic initiation path of Tantrism.

In Buddhist iconography, the tantric initiation goddesses, the *dakinis* are represented dancing within a fiery circle of flame. These are supernatural female beings encountered by the yogi on his initiatory journey who assist him in his spiritual development, but with whom he can also fall into serious conflict. Translated, *dakini* means “sky-going one” or “woman who flies” or “sky dancer”. (Herrmann-Pfand, 1996, pp. 68, 38). In Buddhism the name appeared around 400 C.E.

The German Tibetologist Albert Grünwedel was his whole life obsessed with the idea that the “heaven/sky walkers” were once human “wisdom companions”, who, after they had been killed in a fire ritual, continued to function in the service of the tantric teachings as female spirit beings (*genies*). He saw in the dakinis the “souls of murdered *mudras*” banished by magic, and believed that after their sacrificial death they took to haunting as Buddhist ghosts (Grünwedel, 1933, p. 5). Why, he asked, do the dakinis always hold skull cups and cleavers in their hands in visual representations? Obviously, as can be read everywhere, to warn the initiands against the transient and deceptive world of *samsara* and to cut them off from it. But Grünwedel sees this in a completely different light: For him, just as the saints display the instruments of their martyrdom in Christian iconography, so too the tantric goddesses demonstrate their mortal passing with knives and skulls; like their European sisters, the witches, with whom they have so much in common, they are to be burnt at the stake (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, p. 41) Grünwedel traces the origin of this female sacrifice back to the marked misogyny of the early phase of Buddhism: “The insults [thrown at] the woman sound dreadful. ... The body of the woman is a veritable cauldron of hell, the woman a magical form of the demons of destruction” (Grünwedel, 1924, vol. 2, p. 29).

One could well shrug at the speculations of this German Tibetologist and Asian researcher. As far as they are understood symbolically, they do not contradict tantric orthodoxy in the slightest, which even teaches the destruction of the “external” feminine as an article of faith. As we have seen, the sacrificial goddesses are burnt symbolically. Some tantras even explicitly confirm

Grünwedel's thesis that the dakinis were once "women of flesh and blood", who were later transformed into "spirit beings" (Bhattacharyya, 1982, p. 121). Thus she was sacrificed as a *karma mudra*, a human woman in order to then be transformed into an *inana mudra*, an imaginary woman. But the process did not end here, then the *inana mudra* still had an existence external to the adept. She also needed to be "sacrificed" in order to create the "inner woman", the *maha mudra*. A passage from the *Candamaharosana Tantra* thus plainly urges the adept: "Threaten, threaten, kill, kill, slay slay all Dakinis!" (quoted by George, 1974, p. 64)

But what is the intent behind a fiery dakini sacrifice? The same as that behind all the other tantric rituals, namely the absorption of *gynergy* upon which to found the yogi's omnipotence. Here the longed-for feminine elixir has its own specific names. The adept calls it the "heart blood of the dakini", the "essence of the dakini's heart", the "life-heart of the dakini" (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 342). "Via the 'conversion' the Dakinis become protectors of the religion, once they have surrendered their 'life-heart' to their conqueror", a tantra text records (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 204).

This "surrender of the heart" can often be brutal. For example, a Tibetan story tells of how the yogini Magcig declares that she is willing for her breast to be slit open with a knife — whether in reality or just imagination remains unclear. Her heart was then taken out, "and whilst the red blood — drip, drip — flowed out", laid in a skull bowl. Then the organ was consumed by five dakinis who were present. Following this dreadful heart operation Magcig had transformed herself into a dakini (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 164). As macabre as this story is, on the other hand it shows that the tantric female sacrifice need not necessarily be carried out against the will of woman to be sacrificed. In contrast, the yogini often surrenders her heart-blood voluntarily because she loves her master. Like Christ, she lets herself be crucified for love. But her guru may never let this love run free. He has a sacred duty to control the feelings of the heart, and the power to manipulate them.

In the dakini's heart lies the secret of enlightenment and thus of universal power. She is the "Queen of Hearts", who — like Diana, Princess of Wales — must undergo a violent "sacrificial death" in order to then shine as the pure ideal of the *monarchy* (the "autocratic rule" of the yogis). Lama Govinda also makes reference to a fiery sacrificial apotheosis of the dakini when he proclaims in a vision that all feminine forces are concentrated in the sky walkers, "until focused on a point as if through a lens they kindle to a supreme heat and become the holy flame of inspiration which leads to perfect enlightenment" (Govinda, 1991, p. 231). It need not be said that here the inspiration and enlightenment of the male tantra master alone is meant and not that of his female sacrifice.

### **Vajrayogini**

The "tantric female sacrifice" has found a sublime and many-layered expression in what is known as the "*Vajrayogini* rite", which we would like to examine briefly because of its broad distribution

among the Tibetan lamas. *Vajrayogini* is the most important female divine figure in the highest yogic practices of Tibetan Buddhism. The goddess is worshipped as, among other things, “Mistress of the World”, the “Mother of all Buddhas”, “Queen of the Dakinis”, and a “Powerful Possessor of Knowledge”. Her reverential cult is so unique in androcentric Lamaism that a closer examination has much to recommend it. In so doing we draw upon a document on *Vajrayogini* praxis by the Tibetan lama Kelsang Gyatso.

This tantric ritual, centered upon a principal female figure, begins like all others, with the pupil's adoration of the guru. Seated upon two cushions which represent the sun and moon, the master holds a *vajra* and a *bell* in his hands, thus emphasizing his androgyny and transsexual power.



*Vajra Yogini in the burning circle*

External, internal, and secret sacrifices are made to him and his lineage. Above all this concerns many imagined “sacrificial goddesses” which emanate from the pupil’s breast and from there enter the teacher’s heart. Among these are the goddesses of beauty, music, flowers, and the light. With the “secret sacrifices” the sadhaka pronounces the following: “And I offer most attractive illusory mudras, a host of messengers born from places, born from mantra, and spontaneously born, with lender bodies, skilled in the 64 arts of love” (Gyatso, 1991, p. 250).

In the *Vajrayogini* praxis a total of three types of symbolic female sacrifice are distinguished. Two of these consist in the offering of *inana mudras*, that is of “spirit women”, who are drawn from the pupil’s imagination. In the third sacrificial offering he presents his teacher with a real sexual partner (*karma mudra*) (Gyatso, 1991, p. 88).

Once all the women have been presented to the guru and he has absorbed their energies, the image of the *Vajrayogini* arises in his heart. Her body appears in red and glows like the “apocalyptic fire”. In her right hand she holds a knife with a *vajra*-shaped handle, in her left a skull bowl filled with blood. She carries a magic wand across her shoulders, the tip of which is adorned with three tiny human heads. She wears a crown formed out of five skulls. A further fifty severed heads are linked in a chain which swings around her neck. Beneath her feet the Hindu divinity *Shiva* and the red *Kalarati* crouch in pain.

Thereupon her image penetrates the pupil, and takes possession of him, transforming him into itself via an internalized iconographic dramaturgy. That the sadhaka now represents the female divinity is considered a great mystery. Thus the master now whispers into his ear, “Now you are entering into the lineage of all yoginis. You should not mention these holy secrets of all the yoginis to those who have not entered the mandala of all the yoginis or those who have no faith” (Gyatso, 1991, p. 355). With divine pride the pupil replies, “I am the Enjoyment Body of *Vajrayogini!*” (Gyatso, 1991, p. 57) or simply and directly says, “I am *Vajrayogini!*” (Gyatso, 1991, p. 57). Then, as a newly arisen goddess he comes to sit face-to-face with his guru. Whether the latter now enjoys sexual union with the sadhaka as *Vajrayogini* cannot be determined from the available texts.

At any rate we must regard this artificial goddess as a female mask, behind which hides the male sadhaka who has assumed her form. He can of course set this mask aside again. It is impressive just how vivid and unadorned the description of this reverse transformation of the “*Vajrayogini* pupil” into his original form is: “With the clarity of *Vajrayogini*”, he says in one ritual text, “I give up my breasts and develop a penis. In the perfect place in the center of my vagina the two walls transform into bell-like testicles and the stamen into the penis itself” (Gyatso, 1991, p. 293).

Other sex-change transfigurations are also known from *Vajrayogini* praxis. Thus, for example, the teacher can play the role of the goddess and let his pupil take on the male role. He can also

divide himself into a dozen goddesses — yet it is always men (the guru or his pupils) who play the female roles.

### *Chinnamunda*

The dreadful *Chinnamunda* (*Chinnamastra*) ritual also refers to a “tantric female sacrifice”. At the center of this ritual drama we find a goddess (*Chinnamunda*) who decapitates herself. Iconographically, she is depicted as follows: *Chinnamunda* stands upright with the cleaver with which she has just decapitated herself clenched in her right hand. On her left, raised palm she holds her own head. Three thick streams of blood spurt up from the stump of her neck. The middle one curves in an arc into the mouth of her severed head, the other two flow into the mouths of two further smaller goddesses who flank *Chinnamunda*. She usually tramples upon one or more pairs of lovers. This bloody cult is distributed in both Tantric Buddhism and Hinduism.

According to one pious tale of origin, *Chinnamunda* severs her own head because her two servants complain of a great hunger which she is unable to assuage. The decapitation was thus motivated by great compassion with two suffering beings. It nevertheless appears grotesque that an individual like *Chinnamunda*, in possession of such extraordinary magical powers, would be forced to feed her companions with her own blood, instead of conjuring up an opulent meal for them with a spell. According to another, metaphysical interpretation, the goddess wanted to draw attention to the unreality of all being with her self-destructive deed. Yet even this philosophical platitude can barely explain the horrible scenario, although one is accustomed to quite a deal from the tantras. Is it not therefore reasonable to see a merciless representation of a “tantric female sacrifice” in the *Chinnamunda* myth? Or are we here dealing with an ancient matriarchal cult in which the goddess gives a demonstration of her triune nature and her indestructibility via an in the end “ineffectual” act of self-destruction?

This gynocentric thesis is reminiscent of an analysis of the ritual by Elisabeth Anne Benard, in which she explains *Chinnamunda* and her two companions to be an emanation of the triune goddess (Benard, 1994, p. 75). [1]

*Chinnamunda* is in no sense the sole victim in this macabre horror story; rather, she also extracts her life energies from out of the erotic love between the two sexes, just like a Buddhist tantra master. Indeed, in her canonized iconographic form she dances about upon one or two pairs of lovers, who in some depictions are engaged in sexual congress. The Indologist David Kinsley thus sums up the events in a concise and revealing equation: “Chinnamasta [*Chinnamunda*] takes life and vigor from the copulating couple, then gives it away lavishly by cutting off her own head to feed her devotees” (Kinsley, 1986, p. 175). Thus, a “sacrificial couple” and the theft of their love energy are to be found at the outset of this so difficult to interpret blood rite.

Yet the mystery remains as to why this particular drama, with its three female protagonists, was adopted into Tantric Buddhist meditative practices. We can see only two possible explanations for this. Firstly, that it represents an attempt by *Vajrayana* to incorporate within its own system every sacrificial magic element, regardless how bizarre, and even if it originated among the followers of a matriarchal cult. By appropriating the absolutely foreign, the yogi all the more conspicuously demonstrates his omnipotence. Since he is convinced of his ability to — in the final instance — play all gender roles himself and since he also believes himself a lord over life and death, he thus also regards himself as the master of this *Chinnamunda* “female ritual”. The second possibility is that the self-sacrifice of the goddess functions as a veiled reference to the “tantric female sacrifice” performed by the yogi, which is nonetheless capable of being understood by the initiated. [2]

## Summary

The broad distribution of human sacrifice in nearly all cultures of the world has for years occasioned a many-sided discussion among anthropologists and psychologist of the most varied persuasions as to the social function and meaning of the “*sacrificium humanum*”. In this, reference has repeatedly been made to the double-meaning of the sacrificial act, which simultaneously performs both a destructive and a regulative function in the social order. The classic example for this is the sacrifice of the so-called “scapegoat”. In this case, the members of a community make use of magical gestures and spells to transfer all of their faults and impurities onto one particular person who is then killed. Through the destruction of the victim the negative features of the society are also obliterated. The psychologist Otto Rank sees the motivation for such a transference magic in, finally, the individual’s fear of death. (quoted by Wilber, 1990, p. 176).

Another sacrificial gnosis, particularly predominant in matriarchal cults presupposes that fertility can be generated through subjecting a person to a violent death or bleeding them to death. Processes from the world of vegetative nature, in which plants die back every year in order to return in spring, are simulated. In this view, death and life stand in a necessary relation to one another; death brings forth life.

A relation between fertility and human sacrifice is also formed in the ancient Indian culture of the *Vedas*. The earth and the life it supports, the entire universe in fact, were formed, according to the Vedic myth of origin, by the independent self-dismemberment of the holy adamic figure *Prajapati*. His various limbs and organs formed the building blocks of our world. But these lay unlinked and randomly scattered until the priests (the *Brahmans*) came and wisely recombined them through the constant performance of sacrificial rites. Via the sacrifices, the Brahman guaranteed that the cosmos remained stable, and that gave them enormous social power.

All these aspects may, at least in general, contribute to the “tantric female sacrifice”, but the central factors are the two elements already mentioned:

1. **The destruction of the feminine as a symbol of the highest illusion (*Hinayana* and *Mahayana* Buddhism)**
2. **The sacrifice of the woman in order to absorb her *gynergy* (*Tantrayana*).**

Let us close this chapter by once again summing up why the female sacrifice is essential for the tantric rite: Everything which opposes a detachment from this world, which is characterized by suffering and death, all the obscuring of *Maya*, the entire deception of *samsara* is the shameful work of woman. Her liquidation as an autonomous entity brings to nothing this world of appearances of ours. In the tantric logic of inversion, only transcending the feminine can lead to enlightenment and liberation from the hell of rebirth. It alone promises eternal life. The yogi may thus call himself a “hero” (*vira*), because he had the courage and the high arts needed to absorb the most destructive and most base being in the universe within himself, in order not just to render it harmless but to also transform it into positive energy for the benefit of all beings.

This “superhuman” victory over the “female disaster” convinced the Tantrics that the seed for a radical inversion into the positive is also hidden in all other *negative* deeds, substances, and individuals. The impure, the evil, and the criminal are thus the raw material from which the *Vajra* master tries to distill the pure, the good, and the holy.

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### Footnotes:

[1] Elisabeth Anne Benard would like to clearly distinguish her interpretation from an androcentric reading of the ritual. She openly admits her feminist intentions and celebrates *Chinnamunda* as both a female “solar deity” and a “triune moon goddess”. She thus accords her gynandric control over the two heavenly bodies and both genders.

[2] The Tibetan texts which describe the rite of Chinnamunda, see in it a symbol for the three energy channels, with which the yogi experiments in his mystical body. (We will discuss this in detail later.) Hence, the famous scholar Taranatha writes, “when the [female] ruler severs her head from her own neck with the cleaver held in her right hand, the three veins Avadhuti, Ida and Pingala are severed, and through this the flow of greed, hate, and delusion is cut off, for herself and for all beings” (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, pp. 263–264). This comparison is somewhat strained, however, since the inner energy channels are in fact sex-specific (Ida — masculine; Pingala — feminine; Avadhuti — androgyne) and for this reason could well present difficulties for a representation in the form of three women.

## 4. THE LAW OF INVERSION

Every type of passion (sexual pleasure, fits of rage, hate and loathing) which is normally considered taboo by Buddhist ethical standards, is activated and nurtured in *Vajrayana* with the goal of then transforming it into its opposite. The Buddhist monks, who are usually subject to a strict, puritanical-seeming set of rules, cultivate such “breaches of taboo” without restriction, once they have decided to follow the “Diamond Path”. Excesses and extravagances now count as part of their chosen lifestyle. Such acts are not simply permitted, but are prescribed outright, because according to tantric doctrine, evil can only be driven out by evil, greed by greed alone, and poison is the only cure for poison.

Suitably radical instructions can be found in the *Hevajra Tantra*: “A wise man ... should remove the filth of his mind by filth ... one must rise by that through which one falls”, or, more vividly, “As flatulence is cured by eating beans so that wind may expel wind, as a thorn in the foot can be removed by another thorn, and as a poison can be neutralized by poison, so sin can purge sin” (Walker, 1982, p. 34). For the same reason, the *Kalachakra Tantra* exhorts its pupils to commit the following: to kill, to lie, to steal, to break the marriage vows, to drink alcohol, to have sexual relations with lower-class girls (Broido, 1988, p. 71). A Tantric is freed from the chains of the wheel of life by precisely that which imprisons a normal person.

As a tantric saying puts it, “What binds the fool, liberates the wise” (Dasgupta, 1974, p. 187), and another, more drastic passage emphasizes that, “the same deed for which a normal mortal would burn for a hundred million eons, through this same act an initiated yogi attains enlightenment” (Eliade, 1985, p. 272). According to this, every ritual is designed to catapult the initiand into a state beyond good and evil.

This spiritual necessity to encounter the forbidden, has essentially been justified via five arguments:

Firstly, through breaking a taboo for which there is often a high penalty, the adept confirms the core of the entire Buddhist philosophy: the emptiness (*shunyata*) of all appearances. “I am void, the world is void, all three worlds are void”, the *Maha Siddha* Tilopa triumphantly proclaims — therefore “neither sin nor virtue” exist (Dasgupta, 1974, p. 186). The *shunyata* principle thus provides a metaphysical legitimization for any conceivable “crime”, as it actually lacks any inherent existence.

A second argument follows from the emptiness, the “equivalence of all being”. Neither purity nor impurity, neither lust nor loathing, neither beauty nor ugliness exist. There is thus “no difference between food and offal, between fruit juice and blood, between vegetable sap and urine, between syrup and semen” (Walker, 1982, p.32). A fearless *maha siddha* justifies a serious misdeed of which he has been accused with the words: A fearless *maha siddha* justifies a serious misdeed of which he has been accused with the words: “Although medicine and poison create contrary effects, in their ultimate essence they are one; likewise negative qualities and aids on the path, one in essence, should not be differentiated” (quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 69). Thus the yogi could with a clear conscience wander along ways on the far side of the dominant moral codex. “By the same evil acts that bring people into hell the one who uses the right means gains salvation, there is no doubt. All evil and virtue are said to have thought as their basis” (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 174).

The third — somewhat ad hoc, but nonetheless frequent — justification for the “transgressions” of the *Vajrayana* consists in the Bodhisattva vow of *Mahayana* Buddhism, which requires that one aid and assist every creature until it attains enlightenment. Amazingly, this pious purpose can render holy the most evil means. “If”, we can read in one of the tantras, “for the good of all living beings or on account of the Buddha’s teaching one should slay living beings, one is untouched by sin. ... If for the good of living beings or from attachment for the Buddha’s interest, one seizes the wealth of others, one is not touched by sin”, and so forth (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 176). In the course of Tibetan history the Bodhisattva vow has, as we shall show in the second part of our study, legitimated numerous political and family-based murders, whereby the additional “clever” argument was also employed, that one had “freed” the murder victim from the world of appearances (*samsara*) and that he or she thus owed a debt of thanks to the murderer.

The fourth argument, which was also widespread in other magical cultures, is familiar to us from homeopathy, and states: *similia similibus curantur* (‘like cures like’). In this healing practice one usually works with tiny quantities, major sins can thus be expiated by more minor transgressions.

The fifth and final argument attempts to persuade us that enlightenment *per se* arises through the radical inversion of its opposite and that there is absolutely no other possible way to break free of the chains of *samsara*. Here, the tantric logic of inversion has become a dogma which no longer tolerates other paths to enlightenment. In this light, we can read in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* that “the most lowly-born, flute-makers and so forth, such [people] who constantly have murder alone in mind, attain perfection via this highest way” (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 128). Yes, in some texts an outright proportionality exists between the magnitude of the “crime” and the speed with which the spiritual “liberation” occurs.

However, this tantric logic of inversion contains a dangerous paradox. On the one hand, *Vajrayana* stands not just in radical opposition to “social” norms, but likewise also to the original fundamental rules of its own Buddhist system. Thus, it must constantly fear accusations and persecution from its religious brethren. On the other there is the danger mentioned by Friedrich

Nietzsche, that anyone who too often looks monsters in the face can themselves become a monster. Sadly, history — especially that of Tibet — teaches us how many tantra masters were not able to rid themselves of the demons that they summoned. We shall trace this fate in the second part of our study.

### The twilight language

In order to keep hidden from the public all the offensive things which are implicated by the required breaches of taboo, some tantra texts make use of a so-called “twilight language” (*samdhya-bhasa*). This has the function of veiling references to taboo substances, private bodily parts, and illegal deeds in poetic words, so that they cannot be recognized by the uninitiated. For example, one says “lotus” and means “vagina”, or employs the term “enlightenment consciousness” (*bodhicitta*) for sperm, or the word “sun” (*surya*) for menstrual blood. Such a list of synonyms can be extended indefinitely.

It would, however, be hasty to presume that the potential of the tantric twilight language is exhausted by the employment of euphemistic expressions for sexual events in order to avoid stirring up offense in the world at large. In keeping with the magical world view of Tantrism, an equivalence or interdependence is often posited between the chosen “poetic” denotation and its counterpart in “reality”. Thus, as we shall later see, the male seed does indeed effect enlightenment consciousness (*bodhicitta*) when it is ritually consumed, and the vagina does in fact transform itself through meditative imagination into a lotus.

Of course, in such a metaphoric twilight everything is possible! Since, in contrast to the extensive commentaries, the taboo violations are often explicitly and unashamedly discussed in the original tantric texts, modern textual exegetes have often turned the tables. For example, in the unsavory horror scenes which are recounted here, the German lama Govinda sees warning signs which act as a deterrent to impudent intruders into the mysteries. To prevent unauthorized persons entering paradise, it is depicted as a slaughterhouse. But this imputed circumscription of the beautiful with the horrible contradicts the sense of the tantras, the intention of which is precisely to be sought in the transformation of the base into the sublime and thus the deliberate confrontation with the abominations of this world.

The scenarios which are presented in the following pages are indeed so abnormal that the hair of the early Western scholars stood on end when they first translated the tantric texts from Tibetan or Sanskrit. E. Burnouf was dismayed: “One hesitates to reproduce such hateful and humiliating teachings”, he wrote in the year 1844 (von Glasenapp, 1940, p. 167). Almost a century later, even world famous Tibetologists like Giuseppe Tucci or David Snellgrove admitted that they had simply omitted certain passages from their translated versions because of the horrors described therein, even though they thus abrogated their scholarly responsibilities (Walker, 1982, p. 121). Today, in the age of unlimited information, any resistance to the display of formerly taboo pictures is rapidly

evaporating. Thus, in some modern translation one is openly confronted with all the “crimes and sexual deviations” in the tantras.

## Sexual desire

Let us begin anew with the topic of sex. This is the axis around which all of Tantrism revolves. We have already spoken at length about why women were regarded as the greatest obstacle along the masculine path to enlightenment. Because the woman represents the feared gateway to rebirth, because she produces the world of illusion, because she steals the forces of the man — the origins of evil lie within her. Accordingly, to touch a woman was also the most serious breach of taboo for a Buddhist from the pre-tantric phase. The severity of the transgression was multiplied if it came to sexual intercourse.

But precisely because most extreme estrangement from enlightenment is inherent to the “daughters of *Mara*”, because they are considered the greatest obstacle for a man and barricade the realm of freedom, according to the tantric “law of inversion” they are for any adept the most important touchstone on the initiation path. He who understands how to gain mastery over women also understands how to control all of creation, as it is represented by him. On account of this paradox, sexual union enjoys absolute priority in *Vajrayana*. All other ritual acts, no matter how bizarre they may appear, are derived from this sexual magic origin.

Actually, the same tantric postulate — that the overcoming of an opposite pole should be considered more valuable and meritorious the more abnormal characteristics it exhibits — must also be valid for sexuality. According to the “law of inversion”, the more gloomy, repulsive, aggressive and perverse a woman is, the more suitable she must be to serve as a sexual partner in the rituals. But the preference of the yogis for especially young and attractive girls (which we mention above) seems to contradict this postulated ugliness.

Incidentally, the *Kalachakra Tantra* is itself aware of this contradiction, but is unable to resolve it. Thus the third book of the Time Tantra has the following suggestions to make: “Terrible women, furious, stuck-up, money-hungry, quarrelsome...are to be avoided” (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, p. 121). But then, a few pages later, we find precisely the opposite: “A woman, who has abandoned herself to a lust for life, who takes delight in human blood ... is to be revered by the yogi” (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, p. 146). The fourth book deals with the “law of inversion” directly, and in verse 207 describes the *karma mudra* as a “gnarled hetaera”. Directly after this follows the argument as to why a goddess must be hiding behind the face of the hetaera, since for the yogi, “gold [can] be worth the same as copper, a jewel from the crown of a god the same as a sliver of glass, if unheard of masculine force can be received through the loving donations of trained hetaeras ...” (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra IV*, p. 209) — that is, the highest masculine can be won from the basest feminine.

In this light, the *Chakrasamvara Tantra* recommends erotic praxis with haughty, moody, proud, dominant, wild, and untamable women, and the yogini *Laksminkara* urges the reader to revere a woman who is “mutilated and misshapen” (Gäng, 1988, p. 59). The *Maha Siddha* Tilopa also adhered strictly to the tantric politics of inversion and copulated with a woman, who bore the “eighteen marks of ugliness”, whatever they may be. His pupil Naropa followed in his footsteps and was initiated by an “ugly leprous old crone”. The later’s successor, Marpa, received his initiation at the hands of a “foul-smelling ‘funeral-place dakini’ ... with long emaciated breasts and huge sex organs of offensive odor” (Walker, 1982, p. 75).

Whilst the ugly “love partners” threaten at the outset the way to salvation and the life of an adept, at the end of the tantric process of inversion they shine like fairy-tale beauties, who have been transformed from toads into princesses. Thus, after the transmutation, a “jackal jaws” has become the “dakini of wisdom”; a “lion’s gob” the honourable “Buddha dakini” with “a bluish complexion and a radiant smile”; a “beak-face” a “jewel dakini” with an “pretty, white face” and so forth (Stevens, 1990, p. 97). All these charming creatures are under the complete control of their guru, who through the conquest of the demonic woman has attained the qualification of sorcerer and now calls the tune for the transformed demonesses.

For readily understandable reasons the fact remains that in the sexual magic practices a preference is shown for working with young and attractive girls. But even for this a paradoxical explanation is offered: Due to their attractiveness the virgins are far more dangerous for the yogi than an old hag. The chances that he lose his emotional and sexual self-control in such a relationship are thus many times higher. This means that attractive women present him with a even greater challenge than do the ugly.

The tantras are more consistent when applying the “law of inversion” to the social class of the female partners than they are with regard to age and beauty. Women from lower castes are not just recommendable, but rather appear to be downright necessary for the performance of certain rituals. The *Kalachakra Tantra* lists female gardeners, butchers, potters, whores, and needle-workers among its recommendations (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, pp. 130, 131). In other texts there is talk of female pig-herds, actresses, dancers, singers, washerwomen, barmaids, weavers and similar. “Courtesans are also favored”, writes the Tibet researcher Matthias Hermanns, “since the more lecherous, depraved, dirty, morally repugnant and dissolute they are, the better suited they are to their role” (Hermanns, 1975, p. 191). This appraisal is in accord with the call of the Tantric Anangavajra to accept any *mudra*, whatever nature she may have, since “everything having its existence in the ultimate non-dual substance, nothing can be harmful for yoga; and therefore the yogin should enjoy everything to his heart’s content without the least fear or hesitation” (Dasgupta, 1974, p. 184).

Time and again, so-called *candalis* are mentioned as the Tantric’s sexual partners. These are girls from the lowest caste, who eke out a meager living with all manner of work around the crematoria. It is evident from a commentary upon the *Hevajra Tantra* that among other things they

there offered themselves to the vagrant yogis for the latter's sexual practices (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 168). For an orthodox Hindu such creatures were considered untouchable. If even the shadow of a *candali* fell upon a Hindu, the disastrous consequences were life-long for the latter.

Since it annulled the strict prescriptions of the Hindu caste system with its rituals, a fundamentally social revolutionary attitude has been ascribed to Tantric Buddhism. In particular, modern feminists accredit it with this (Shaw, 1994, p. 62). But, aside from the obvious fact that women from the lower classes are more readily available as sexual partners, here too the "law of inversion" is considered decisive for the choice to be made. The social inferiority of the woman increases the "antinomism" of the tantric rituals. "It is the symbol of the 'washerwoman' and the 'courtesan' [which are] of decisive significance", we may read in a book by Mircea Eliade, "and we must familiarize ourselves with the fact that, in accordance with the tantric doctrine of the identity of opposites, the 'most noble and valuable' is precisely [to be found] hidden within the 'basest and most banal'" (Eliade, 1985, p. 261, note 204).

Likewise, when women from the higher castes (Brahmans, 'warriors', or rich business people) are on the Tantric's wish list, especially when they are married, the law of inversion functions here as well, since a rigid taboo is broken through the employment of a wife from the upper classes — an indicator for the boundless power of the yogi.

### **The incest taboo**

There is indisputable evidence from archaic societies for the violation of the incest prohibition: there is hardly a tantra of the higher class in which sexual intercourse with one's own mother or daughter, with aunts or sisters-in-law is not encouraged. Here too the German lama Govinda emphatically protests against taking the texts literally. It would be downright ridiculous to think "that Tantric Buddhists really did encourage incest and sexual deviations (Govinda, 1991, p. 113). Mother, sister, daughter and so on stood for the four elements, egomania, or something similar.

But such symbolic assignments do not necessarily contradict the possibility of an incestuous praxis, which is in fact found not just in the Tibet of old, but also in totally independent cultures scattered all around the world. Here too, it remains valid that the yogi, who is as a matter of principle interested in a fundamental violation of proscriptions, must really long for an incestuous relationship. There is also no lack of historical reports. We present the curse of a puritanically minded lama from the 16th century, who addressed the excesses of his libertine colleagues as follows: "In executing the rites of sexual union the people copulate without regard to blood relations ... You are more impure than dogs and pigs. As you have offered the pure gods feces, urine, sperm and blood, you will be reborn in the swamp of rotten cadavers" (Paz, 1984, p.95).

## Eating and drinking impure substances

A central role in the rites is played by the tantric meal. It is absolutely forbidden for Buddhist monks to eat meat or drink alcohol. This taboo is also deliberately broken by *Vajrayana* adepts. To make the transgression more radical, the consumption of types of meat which are generally considered “forbidden” in Indian society is desired: elephant meat, horsemeat, dogflesh, beef, and human flesh. The latter goes under the name of *maha mamsa*, the ‘great flesh’. It usually came from the dead, and is a “meat of those who died due to their own karma, who were killed in battle due to evil karma or due to their own fault”, Pundarika writes in his traditional *Kalachakra* commentary, and goes on to add that it is sensible to consume this substance in pill form (Newman, 1987, p. 266). Small amounts of tit are also recommended in a modern text on the *Kalachakra Tantra* as well (Dhargyey, 1985, p. 25). There are recipes which distinguish between the various body parts and demand the consumption of brain, liver, lungs, intestines, testes and so forth for particular ceremonies.

The five taboo types of meat are granted a sacramental character. Within them are concentrated the energies of the highest Buddhas, who are able to appear through the “law of inversion”. The texts thus speak of the “five ambrosias” or “five nectars”. Other impure “foods” have also been assigned to the five Dhyani Buddhas. *Ratnasambhava* is associated with blood, *Amitabha* with semen, *Amoghasiddhi* with human flesh, *Aksobhya* with urine, *Vairocana* with excrement (Wayman, 1973, p. 116).

The *Candamaharosana Tantra* lists with relish the particular substances which are offered to the adept by his wisdom consort during the sexual magic rituals and which he must swallow: excrement, urine, saliva, leftovers from between her teeth, lipstick, dish-water, vomit, the wash water which remains after her anus has been cleaned (George, 1974, pp. 73, 78, 79) Those who “make the excrement and urine their food, will be truly happy”, promises the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 134). In the *Hevajra Tantra* the adept must drink the menstrual blood of his *mudra* out of a skull bowl (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 98). But rotten fish, sewer water, canine feces, corpse fat, the excrement of the dead, sanitary napkins as well as all conceivable “intoxicating drinks” are also consumed (Walker, 1982, pp. 80–84).

There exists a strict commandment that the practicing yogi may not feel any disgust in consuming these impure substances. “One should never feel disgusted by excrement, urine, semen or blood” (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 266). Fundamentally, “he must eat and drink whatever he obtains and he should not hold any notions regarding likes and dislikes” (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 67).

But it is not just in the tantric rites, in Tibetan medicine as well all manner of human and animal excretions are employed for healing purposes. The excrement and urine of higher lamas are sought-after medicines. Processed into pills and offered for sale, they once played -and now play once more — a significant role in the business activities of Tibetan and exile-Tibetan monasteries. Naturally, the highest prices are paid for the excretions of the supreme hierarchy, the Dalai Lama.

There is a report on the young Fourteenth god-king's sojourn in Beijing (in 1954) which recounts how His Holiness's excrement was collected daily in a golden pot in order to then be sent to Lhasa and processed into a medication there (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 22). Even if this source came from the Chinese camp, it can be given credence without further ado, since corresponding practices were common throughout the entire country.

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### The "feast on fæces fallacy"

As damtsig has come into contact with Western psychological materialism, self-defence tactics have taken a variety of forms. The one that has most intrigued me is what I have dubbed the "feast on fæces fallacy" - of which there appear to be two variations. I encountered the first during my introduction to Vajrayana at Vajradhatu Seminary - a three-month practice and study retreat designed by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. I attended this retreat after Trungpa Rinpoche's death, when his son, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, taught it. As the summer progressed and the teachings grew more challenging, speculation about samaya heated up. The speculation took on an odd repeating pattern. At some point in every conversation on the topic, someone would inevitably say, "I heard that samaya means that if the Sakyong tells you to eat shit, you have to do it." The conversation would then devolve into everyone deciding whether they would eat shit or not. After puzzling over it for a while, my eventual response to this statement was, "How likely is it that the Sakyong would ask you to eat shit?" The whole discussion was a scare tactic, however unconscious it may have been. It presented one with an extreme, *reductio ad absurdum* proposition from which one could quite justifiably turn away in disgust. In the process, it just so happened that one also cut oneself off from finding out what samaya actually *did* mean. That version of the Feast on Fæces Fallacy operates by the student scaring himself or herself away from damtsig.

The second variation on this theme operates to discredit the Lama with whom the student might make the vow. A good example of this was in a report on the first conference of Western Buddhist teachers with HH Dalai Lama in Dharamsala in 1993. At one of the conference sessions, Robert Thurman reportedly said that anyone who allowed himself or herself to be called a vajra master should be presented with a plate of excrement and a fork. If he or she was not capable of eating it, based on the principle of rochig (*ro gcig* - one taste), then he or she was a fraud and should take up knitting. This politically devious perspective is one which seeks to neuter every Lama who is not invested with the correct degree of current western adulation. Evidently a Lama who denies being a vajra master but who is nonetheless regarded as a vajra master is exempt from the offer of Robert Thurman's fæcal feast.

From: The "Feast on Fæces Fallacy" Or - how not to scare oneself away from liberation  
- by Nora Cameron in: <http://www.damtsig.org/articles/faeces.html>

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### Necrophilia

In a brilliant essay on Tantrism, the Mexican essayist and poet Octavio Paz drew attention to the fact that the great fondness of the Mexicans for skeletons and skulls could be found nowhere else in the world except in the Buddhist ritual practices of the Tibetans and Nepalese. The difference lies in the fact that in Mexico the death figures are regarded as a mockery of life and the living, whilst in Tantrism they are "horrific and obscene" (Paz, 1984, p. 94). This connection between death and sexuality is indeed a popular *leitmotiv* in Tibetan art. In scroll images the tantric couples are appropriately equipped with skull bowls and cleavers, wear necklaces of severed heads and trample around upon corpses whilst holding one another in the embrace of sexual union.

A general, indeed dominant necrophiliac strain in Tibetan culture cannot be overlooked. Fokke Sierksma's work includes a description of a meditation cell in which a lama had been immured. It was decorated with human hair, skin and bones, which were probably supplied by the dismemberers of corpses. Strung on a line were a number of dried female breasts. The eating bowl of the immured monk was not the usual human skull, but was also made from the cured skin of a woman's breast (Sierksma, 1966, p. 189).

Such macabre ambiances can be dismissed as marginal excesses, which is indeed what they are in the full sweep of Tibetan culture. But they nonetheless stand in a deep meaningful and symbolic connection with the paradoxical philosophy of Tantrism, of Buddhism in general even, which since its beginnings recommended as exercises meditation upon corpses in the various stages of decomposition in order to recognize the transience of all being. Alone the early Buddhist contempt for life, which locked the gateway to *nirvana*, is sufficient to understand the regular fascination with the morbid, the macabre and the decay of the body which characterizes Lamaism. Crematoria, charnel fields, cemeteries, funeral pyres, graves, but also places where a murder was carried out or a bloody battle was fought are considered, in accord with the "law of inversion", to be especially suitable locations for the performance of the tantric rites with a wisdom consort.

The sacred art of Tibet also revels in macabre subjects. In illustrations of the wrathful deities of the Tibetan pantheon, their hellish radiation is transferred to the landscape and the heavens and transform everything into a *nature morte* in the truest sense of the word. Black whirlwinds and greenish poisonous vapors sweep across infertile plains. Deep red rods of lightning flash through the night and rent clouds, ridden by witches, rage across a pitch black sky. Pieces of corpses are scattered everywhere, and are gnawed at by all manner of repulsive beasts of prey.

In order to explain the morbidity of Tibetan monastic culture, the Dutch cultural psychologist Fokke Sierksma makes reference to Sigmund Freud's concept of a "death wish" (*thanatos*). Interestingly, a comparison to Buddhism occurs to the famous psychoanalyst when describing the structure of the necrophiliac urge, which he attributes to, among other things, the "nirvana principle". This he understands to be a general desire for inactivity, rest, resolution, and death, which is claimed to be innate to all life. But in addition to this, since Freud, the death wish also exhibits a concrete sadistic and masochistic component. Both attitudes are expressions of aggression, the one directed outwards (sadism), the other directed inwardly (masochism).

### Ritual murder

The most aggressive form of the externalized death wish is murder. It remains as the final taboo violation within the tantric scheme to still be examined. The ritual killing of people to appease the gods is a sacred deed in many religions. In no sense do such ritual sacrifices belong to the past, rather they still play a role today, for example in the tantric *Kali* cults of India. Even children are

offered up to the cruel goddess on her bloody altars (*Time*, August 1997, p. 18). Among the Buddhist, in particular Tibetan, Tantrics such acts of violence are not so well-known. We must therefore very carefully pose the question of whether a ritual murder can here too be a part of the cult activity.

It is certain at least that all the texts of the Highest Tantra class verbally call for murder. The adept who seeks refuge in the Dhyani Buddha *Akshobya* meditates upon the various forms of hate up to and including aggressive killing. Of course, in this case too, a taboo violation is to be transformed in accordance with the “law of inversion” into its opposite, the attainment of eternal life. Thus, when the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* requires of the adept that “he should kill all sentient beings with this secret thunderbolt” (Wayman, 1977, p. 309), then — according to doctrine — this should occur so as to free them from suffering.

It is further seen as an honorable deed to “deliver” the world from people of whom a yogi knows that they will in future commit nasty crimes. Thus Padmasambhava, the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, in his childhood killed a boy whose future abominable deeds he foresaw.



***Maha Siddha Virupa and an impaled human***

But it is not just pure compassion or a transformatory intent which lies behind the already mentioned calls to murder in the tantras, above all not then when they are directed at the enemies of Buddhism. As, for example, in the rites of the *Hevajra Tantra*: “After having announced the intention to the guru and accomplished beings”, it says there, “perform with mercy the rite of killing of one who is a non-believer of the teachings of the Buddha and the detractors of the gurus and Buddhas. One should emanate such a person, visualizing his form as being upside-down, vomiting blood, trembling and with hair in disarray. Imagine a blazing needle entering his back. Then by envisioning the seed-syllable of the Fire element in his heart he is killed instantly” (quoted by Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 276). The *Guhyasamaja Tantra* also offers instructions on how to — as in voodoo magic — create images of the opponent and inflict “murderous” injuries upon these, which then actually occur in reality: “One draws a man or a woman in chalk or charcoal or similar. One projects an ax in the hand. Then one projects the way in which the throat is slit” (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 225). At another point the enemy is bewitched, poisoned, enslaved, or paralyzed. Corresponding sentences are to be found in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. There too the adept is urged to murder a being which has violated the Buddhist teachings. The text requires, however, that this be carried out with compassion (Dalai Lama XIV, 1985, p. 349).

The destruction of opponents via magical means is part of the basic training of any tantric adept. For example, we learn from the *Hevajra Tantra* a magic spell with the help of which all the soldiers of an enemy army can be decapitated at one stroke (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 30). There we can also find how to produce a blazing fever in the enemy's body and let it be vaporized (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 31). Such magical killing practices were — as we shall show — in no sense marginal to Tibetan religious history, rather they gained entry to the broad-scale politics of the Dalai Lamas.

The destructive rage does not even shy away from titans, gods, or Buddhas. In contrast, through the destruction of the highest beings the Tantric absorbs their power and becomes an arch-god. Even here things sometimes take a sadistic turn, as for example in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*, where the murder of a Buddha is demanded: “One douses him in blood, one douses him in water, one douses him in excrement and urine, one turns him over, stamps on his member, then one makes use of the King of Wrath. If this is completed eight hundred times then even a Buddha is certain to disintegrate” (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 219).

In order to effectively perform this Buddha murder, the yogi invokes an entire pandemonium, whose grotesque appearance could have been modeled on a work by Hieronymus Bosch: “He projects the threat of demons, manifold, raw, horrible, hardened by rage. Through this even the diamond bearer [the Highest Buddha] dies. He projects how he is eaten by owls, crows, by rutting vultures with long beaks. Thus even the Buddha is destroyed with certainty. A black snake, extremely brutish, which makes the fearful be afraid. ... It rears up, higher than the forehead. Consumed by this snake even the Buddha is destroyed with certainty. One lets the the perils and torments of all beings in the ten directions descend upon the enemy. This is the best. This is the supreme type of invocation” (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 230). This can be strengthened with the following aggressive mantra: “Om, throttle, throttle, stand, stand, bind, bind, slay, slay, burn, burn,

bellow, bellow, blast, blast the leader of all adversity, prince of the great horde, bring the life to an end" (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 230).

We encounter a particularly interesting murder fantasy in the deliberate staging of the Oedipus drama which a passage from the *Candamaharosana Tantra* requires. The adept should slay *Aksobhya*, his Buddha father, with a sword, give his mother, *Mamaki*, the flesh of the murdered father to eat and have sexual intercourse with her afterwards (George, 1974, p. 59; Filliozat, 1991, p. 430).

Within the spectrum of Buddhist/tantric killing practices, the deliberately staged "suicide" of the "sevenfold born" represents a specialty. We are dealing here with a person who has been reincarnated seven times and displays exceptional qualities of character. He speaks with a pleasant voice, observes with beautiful eyes and possesses a fine-smelling and glowing body which casts seven shadows. He never becomes angry and his mind is constantly filled with infinite compassion. Consuming the flesh of such a wonderful person has the greatest magical effects.

Hence, the Tantric should offer a "sevenfold born" veneration with flowers and ask him to act in the interests of all suffering beings. Thereupon — it says in the relevant texts — he will without hesitation surrender his own life. Afterwards pills are to be made from his flesh, the consumption of which grant among other things the *siddhis* (powers) of 'sky-walking'. Such pills are in fact still being distributed today. The heart-blood is especially sought after, and the skull of the killed blessed one also possesses magical powers (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 142).

When one considers the suicide request made to the "sevenfold born", the cynical structure of the tantric system becomes especially clear. His flesh is so yearned-for because he exhibits that innocence which the Tantric on account of his contamination with all the base elements of the world of appearances no longer possesses. The "sevenfold born" is the complete opposite of an adept, who has had dealings with the dark forces of the demonic. In order to transform himself through the blissful flesh of an innocent, the yogi requests such a one to deliberately sacrifice himself. And the higher being is so kind that it actually responds to this request and afterwards makes his dead body available for sacred consumption.

The mystery of the eucharist, in which the body and blood of Christ is divided among his believers springs so readily to mind that it is not impossible that the tantric consumption of a "sevenfold born" represents a Buddhist paraphrase of the Christian Last Supper. (The tantras appeared in the 4th century C.E. at the earliest.) But such self-sacrificial scenes can also be found already in *Mahayana* Buddhism. In the *Sutra of Perfected Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses* a description can be found of how the Bodhisattva Sadaprarudita dismembers his own body in order to worship his teacher. Firstly he slits both his arms so that the blood pours out. Then he slices the flesh from his legs and finally breaks his own bones so as to be able to also offer the marrow as a gift.

Whatever opinion one has of such ecstatic acts of self-dismemberment, in *Mahayana* they always demonstrate the heroic deed of an ethically superior being who wishes to help others. In contrast, the cynical sacrifice of the “sevenfold born” demonstrates the exploitation of a noble and selfless sentiment to serve the power interests of the Tantric. In the face of such base motives, the Tibet researcher David Snellgrove with some justification doubts the sevenfold incarnated’s imputed preparedness to be sacrificed: “Did one track him down and wait for him to die or did one hasten the process? All these tantras give so many fierce rites with the object of slaying, that the second alternative might not seem unlikely ...” (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 161).

### Symbol and reality

Taking Snellgrove's suspicion as our starting point, the question arises as to whether the ritual murder of a person is intended to be real or just symbolic in the tantric scripts. Among Western interpreters of the tantras opinions are divided. Early researchers such as Austine Waddell or Albert Grünwedel presumed a literal interpretation of the rituals described in the texts and were dismayed by them. Among contemporary authors, especially those who are themselves Buddhists, the “crimes” of *Vajrayana* are usually played down as allegorical metaphors, as Michael M. Broido or Anagarika Govinda do in their publications, for example. This toned-down point of view is, for readily understandable reasons, today thankfully adopted by Tibetan lamas teaching everywhere in the Western world. It liberates the gurus from tiresome confrontations with the ethical norms of the cultures in which they have settled after their flight from Tibet. They too now see themselves called to transform the offensive shady sides of the tantras into friendly bright sides: “Human flesh” for example is to be understood as referring to the own imperfect self which the yogi “consumes” in a figurative sense through his sacred practices. “To kill” means to rob dualistic thought patterns of their life in order to recreate the original unity with the universe, and so forth. But despite such euphemisms an unpleasant taste remains, since the statements of the tantras are so unequivocal and clear.

It is at any rate a fact that the entire tantric ritual schema does not get by without dead body parts and makes generous use of them. The sacred objects employed consist of human organs, flesh, and bones. Normally these are found at and collected from the public crematoria in India or the charnel fields of Tibet.

But there are indications which must be taken seriously that up until this century Tibetans have had to surrender their lives for ritualistic reasons. The (fourteenth-century) *Blue Annals*, a seminal document in the history of Tibetan Buddhism, already reports upon how in Tibet the so-called “18 robber-monks” slaughtered men and women for their tantric ceremonies (*Blue Annals*, 1995, p. 697). The Englishman Sir Charles Bell visited a stupa on the Bhutan-Tibet border in which the ritually killed body of an eight-year-old boy and a girl of the same age were found (Bell, 1927, p. 80). Attestations of human sacrifice in the Himalayas recorded by the American anthropologist Robert Ekvall date from the 1950s (Ekvall, 1964, pp. 165–166, 169, 172).

In their criticism of lamaism, the Chinese make frequent and emphatic reference to such ritual killing practices, which were still widespread at the time of the so-called “liberation” of the country, that is until the end of the 1950s. According to them, in the year 1948 21 individuals were murdered by state sacrificial priests from Lhasa as part of a ritual of enemy destruction, because their organs were required as magical ingredients (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 29). Rather than dismissing such statements in advance as evil communist propaganda, the original spirit of the tantra texts would seem to afford that they be investigated conscientiously and without prejudice.

The morbid ritual objects on display in the *Tibetan Revolutions Museum* established by the Chinese in Lhasa, certainly teach us something about horror: prepared skulls, mummified hands, rosaries made of human bones, ten trumpets made from the thigh bones of 16-year-old girls, and so on. Among the museum’s exhibits is also a document which bears the seal of the (Thirteenth or Fourteenth?) Dalai Lama in which he demands the contribution of human heads, blood, flesh, fat, intestines, and right hands, likewise the skins of children, the menstrual blood of a widow, and stones with which human skulls had been staved in, for the “strengthening of holy order” (Epstein, 1983, p.138). Further, a small parcel of severed and prepared male sexual organs which are needed to conduct certain rituals can also be seen there, as well as the charred body of a young woman who was burned as a witch. If the tantra texts did not themselves mention such macabre requisites, it would never occur to one to take this demonstration of religious violence seriously.

That the Chinese with their accusations of tantric excesses cannot be all that false, is demonstrated by the relatively recent brutal murder of three lamas, which deeply shook the exile-Tibetan community in Dharamsala. On 4 February 1997, the murdered bodies of the 70-year-old lama Lobsang Gyatso, head of the Buddhist-dialectical school, and two of his pupils were found just a few yards from the residence of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. The murderers had repeatedly stabbed their victims with a knife, had slit their throats and according to press reports had partially skinned their corpses (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1997, no. 158, p. 10). All the observers and commentators on the case were of the unanimous opinion that this was a case of ritual murder. In the second part of our analysis we examine in detail the real and symbolic background and political implications of the events of 4 February.

At any rate, the supreme demands which a yogi must make of himself in order to expose a “crime” which he “really” commits as an illusion speaks for the likelihood of the actual staging of a killing during a tantric ritual. In the final instance the conception that everything is only an illusion and has no independent existence leads to an indifference as to whether a murder is real or “just” allegorical. From this point of view everything in the world of *Vajrayana* is both “real” and “symbolic”. “We touch symbols, when we think we are touching bodies and material objects”, writes Octavio Paz with regard to Tantrism, “And vice versa: according to the law of reversibility all symbols are real and touchable, ideas and even nothingness has a taste. It makes no difference whether the crime is real or symbolic: Reality and symbol fuse, and in fusing they dissolve” (Paz, 1984, pp. 91–92).

## Concurrence with the demonic

The excesses of Tantrism are legitimated by the claim that the yogi is capable of transforming evil into good via his spiritual techniques. This inordinate attempt nonetheless give rise to apprehensions as to whether the adept does in fact have the strength to resist all the temptations of the “devil”? Indeed, the “law of inversion” always leads in the first phase to a “concurrence with the demonic” and regards contact with the “devil” as a proper admission test for the path of enlightenment. No other current in any of the world religions thus ranks the demons and their retinue so highly as in *Vajrayana*.

The image packed iconography of Tibet literally teems with terrible deities (*herukas*) and red henchmen. When one dares, one's gaze is met by disfigured faces, hate-filled grimaces, bloodshot eyes, protruding canines. Twisted sneers leave one trembling — at once both terrible and wonderful, as in an oriental fairy-tale. Surrounded by ravens and owls, embraced by snakes and animal skins, the male and female monster gods carry battle-axes, swords, pikes and other murderous cult symbols in their hands, ready at any moment to cut their opponent into a thousand pieces.

The so-called “books of the dead” and other ritual text are also storehouses for all manner of zombies, people-eaters, ghosts, ghouls, furies and fiends. In the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* the concurrence of the Buddhas with the demonic and evil is elevated to an explicit part of the program: “They constantly eat blood and scraps of flesh ... They drink treachery like milk ... skulls, bones, smokehouses, oil and fat bring great joy” (quoted by Gäng, 1988, pp. 259–260). In this document the Buddhist gods give free rein to their aggressive destructive fantasies: “Hack to pieces, hack to pieces, sever, sever, strike, strike, burn, burn” they urge the initiands with furious voices (quoted by Gäng, 1988, p. 220). One could almost believe oneself to be confronted with primordial chaos. Such horror visions are not just encountered by the tantric adept. They also, in Tibetan Buddhist tradition, appear to every normal person, sometimes during a lifetime on earth, but after death inevitably. Upon dying every deceased person must, unless he is already enlightened, progress through a limbo (*Bardo*) in which bands of devils sadistically torment him and attempt to pull the wool over his eyes. As in the Christian Middle Ages, the Tibetan monks' fantasies also revel in unbearable images of hell. It is said that not even a Bodhisattva is permitted to help a person out of the hell of *Vajra* (Trungpa, 1992, p. 68).

Here too we would like to come up with a lengthier description, in order to draw attention to the anachronistic-excruciating world view of Tantric Buddhism: “The souls are boiled in great cauldrons, inserted into iron caskets surrounded by flames, plunge into icy water and caves of ice, wade through rivers of fire or swamps filled with poisonous adders. Some are sawed to pieces by demonic henchmen, others plucked at with glowing tongs, gnawed by vermin, or wander lost through a forest with a foliage of razor sharp daggers and swords. The tongues of those who blasphemed against the teaching grow as big as a field and the devils plow upon them. The hypocrites are crushed beneath huge loads of holy books and towering piles of relics” (Bleichsteiner, 1937, p. 224). There are a total of 18 different hells, one more dreadful than the next. Above all, the most brutal punishments are reserved for those “sinners” who have

contravened the rules of *Vajrayana*. They can wait for their “head and heart [to] burst” (Henss, 1985, p. 46).

A glance at old Tibetan criminal law reveals that such visions of fear and horror also achieved some access to social reality. Its methods of torture and devious forms of punishment were in no way inferior to the Chinese cruelties now denounced everywhere: for example, both hands of thieves were mutilated by being locked into salt-filled leather pouches. The amputation of limbs and bloody floggings on the public squares of Lhasa, deliberately staged freezing to death, shackling, the fitting of a yoke and many other “medieval” torments were to be found in the penal code until well into the 20th century. Western travelers report with horror and loathing of the dark and damp dungeons of the Potala, the official residence of the Dalai Lamas.

This clear familiarity with the spectacle of hell in a religion which bears the banners of love and kindness, peace and compassion is shocking for an outsider. It is only the paradoxicalness of the tantras and the *Madhyamika* philosophy (the doctrine of the ‘emptiness’ of all being) which allows the rapid interplay between heaven and hell which characterizes Tibetan culture. Every lama will answer that, “since everything is pure illusion, that must also be the case for the world of demons”, should one ask him about the devilish ghosts. He will indicate that it is the ethical task of Buddhism to free people from this world of horrors. But only when one has courageously looked the demon in the eye, can he be exposed as illusory or as a ghostly figure thrown up by one’s own consciousness.

Nevertheless, that the obsessive and continuous preoccupation with the terrible is motivated by such therapeutic intentions and philosophical speculations is difficult to comprehend. The demonic is accorded a disturbingly high intrinsic value in Tibetan culture, which influences all social spheres and possesses a seamless tradition. When Padmasambhava converted Tibet to Buddhism in the eighth century, the sagas recount that he was opposed by numerous native male and female devils, against all of whom he was victorious thanks to his skills in magic. But despite his victory he never killed them, and instead forced them to swear to serve Buddhism as protective spirits (*dharmapalas*) in future.

Why, we have to ask ourselves, was this horde of demons snorting with rage not transformed via the tantric “law of inversion” into a collection of peace-loving and graceful beings? Would it not have been sensible for them to have abandoned their aggressive character in order to lead a peaceful and dispassionate life in the manner of the Buddha Shakyamuni? The opposite was the case — the newly “acquired” Buddhist protective gods (*dharmapalas*) had not just the chance but also the duty to live out their innate aggressiveness to the full. This was even multiplied, but was no longer directed at orthodox Buddhists and instead acted to crush the “enemies of the teaching”. The atavistic pandemonium of the pre-Buddhist Land of Snows survived as a powerful faction within the tantric pantheon and, since horror in general exercises a greater power of fascination than a “boring” vision of peace, deeply determined Tibetan cultural life.

Many Tibetans — among them, as we shall later see, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama — still believe themselves to be constantly threatened by demonic powers, and are kept busy holding back the dark forces with the help of magic, supplicatory prayers, and liturgical techniques, but also recruiting them for their own ends, all of which incidentally provides a considerable source of income for the professional exorcists among the lamas. Directly alongside this underworldly abyss — at least in the imagination — a mystic citadel of pure peace and eternal rest rises up, of which there is much talk in the sacred writings. Both visions — that of horror and that of bliss — complement one another and are in Tantrism linked in a “theological” causal relationship which says that heaven may only be entered after one has journeyed through hell.

In his psychoanalytical study of Tibetan culture, Fokke Sierksma conjectures that the chronic fear of demonic attacks was spread by the lamas to help maintain their power and, further to this, is blended with a sadomasochistic delight in the macabre and aggressive. The enjoyment of cruelty widespread among the monks is legitimated by, among other things, the fact that — as can be read in the tantra texts — even the Highest Buddhas can assume the forms of cruel gods (*herukas*) to then, bellowing and full of hate, smash everything to pieces.

These days a smile is raised by the observations of the Briton Austine Waddells, who, in his famous book published in 1899, *The Buddhism in Tibet*, drew attention to the general fear which then dominated every aspect of religious life in Tibet: “The priests must be constantly called in to appease the menacing devils, whose ravenous appetite is only sharpened by the food given to stay it” (quoted by Sierksma, 1966, p. 164). However, Waddell’s images of horror were confirmed a number of decades later by the Tibetologist Guiseppe Tucci, whose scholarly credibility cannot be doubted: “The entire spiritual life of the Tibetans”, Tucci writes, “is defined by a permanent attitude of defense, by a constant effort to appease and propitiate the powers whom he fears” (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 26).

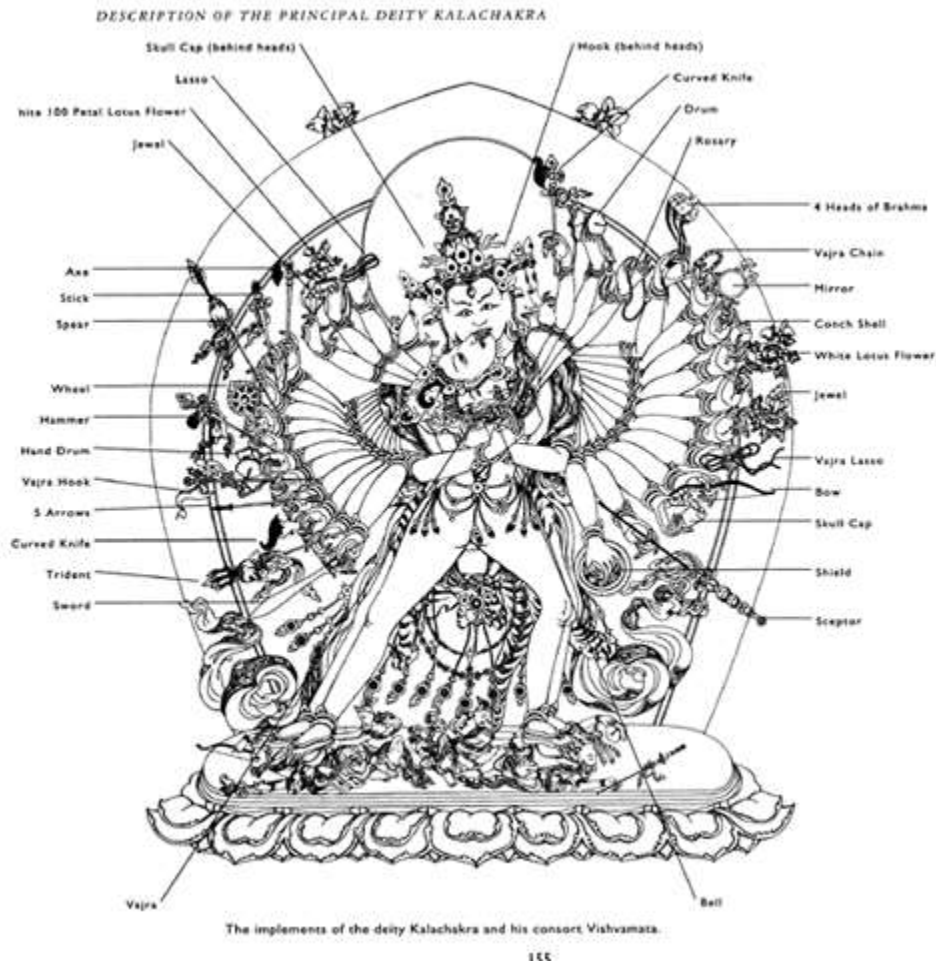
There is no need for us to rely solely on Western interpreters in order to demonstrate Tantrism’s demonic orientation; rather we can form an impression for ourselves. Even a fleeting examination of the violent tantric iconography confirms that horror is a determining element of the doctrine. Why do the “divine” demons on the thangkas only very seldom take to the field against one another but rather almost exclusively mow down men, women, and children? What motivates the “peace-loving” Dalai Lama to choose as his principal protective goddess a maniacal woman by the name of *Palden Lhamo*, who rides day and night through a boiling sea of blood? The fearsome goddess is seated upon a saddle which she herself personally crafted from the skin of her own son. She murdered him in cold blood because he refused to follow in the footsteps of his converted mother and become a Buddhist. Why — we must also ask ourselves — has the militant war god *Begtse* been so highly revered for centuries in the Tibetan monasteries of all sects?

One might believe that this “familiarity with the demonic” would by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have changed among the exile Tibetans, who are praised for their “open-mindedness”. Unfortunately, many events of which we come to speak of in the second part of our study, but most especially the recent and already mentioned ritual murders of 4 February 1997 in Dharamsala, illustrate that the gates of hell are by no means bolted shut. According to reports so far, the perpetrators were acting on behalf of the aggressive protective spirit, *Dorje Shugden*. Even the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has attributed to this *dharmapala* (protective deity) the power to threaten his life and to bewitch him by magical means.

If horror is acceptable, then death is cheap. It is true that in Tantrism death is considered to be a state of consciousness which can be surmounted, but in Tibetan culture (which also incorporates non-tantric elements) like the demons it has also achieved a thriving “life of its own” and enjoys general cult worship. There — as we shall often come to show — it stands at the center of numerous macabre rites. Sigmund Freud’s problematic formulation, that “the goal of all life is death” can in our view be prefaced to Lamaism as its *leitmotiv*.

### **The aggression of the divine couple**

Does this iconography of horror also apply to the divine couple who are worshipped at the heart of the tantric rituals? On the basis of the already described apotheosis of mystic sexual love as the suspension of all opposites, as a creative polarity, as the origin of language, the gods, time, of compassion, emptiness, and of the white light we ought to assume that the primal couple radiate peace, harmony, concord, and joy. In fact there are such blissful illustrations of the love of god and goddess in Tantrism. In this connection the primal Buddha, *Samantabhadra*, highly revered in the Nyingmapa school, deserves special mention; naked he sits in the meditative posture without any ritual objects in his hands, embracing his similarly unclothed partner, *Samantabhadri*. This pure nakedness of the loving couple demonstrates a powerful vision, which breaks through the otherwise usual patriarchal relation of dominance which prevails between the sexes. All other images of the Buddhas with their consorts express an androcentric gesture of dominance through the symbolic objects assigned to them. [1]



### ***The implements of the deity Kalachakra and his consort Vishvamata***

Peaceful images of the divine couple are, however, exceptional within the Highest Tantras and in no way the rule. The majority of the *yab-yum* representations are of the *Heruka* type, that is, they show couples in furious, destructive and violent positions. Above all the Buddha *Hevajra* and his consort *Nairatmya*. Surrounded by eight “burning” dakinis he performs a bizarre dance of hell and is so intoxicated by his killing instinct that he holds a skull bowl in each of his sixteen hands, in which gods, humans, and animals are to be found as victims. In her right hand *Nairatmya* threateningly swings a cleaver. *Raktiamari*, *Yamantaka*, *Cakrasamvara*, *Vajrakila* or whatever names the clusters of pairs from the other tantras may have, all of them exhibit the same striking mixture of aggressiveness, thanatos, and erotic love.

Likewise, the time god, *Kalachakra*, is of the heruka type. His wildness is underlined by his vampire-like canines and his hair which stands on end. The tiger pelt draped around his hips also signalizes his aggressive character. Two of his four faces are not peaceful, but instead express greed and wrath. But above all his destructive attitude is emphasized by the symbols which the “Lord of Time” holds in his twenty-four hands. Of these, six are of a peaceful nature and eighteen

are warlike. Among the latter are the *vajra*, *vajra* hook, sword, trident, cleaver, *damaru* (a drum made from two skull bowls), *kapala* (a vessel made out of a human skull), *khatvanga* (a type of scepter, the tip of which is decorated with three severed human heads), ax, discus, switch, shield, *ankusha* (elephant hook), arrow, bow, sling, prayer beads made from human bones as well as the severed heads of *Brahma*. The peaceable symbols are: a jewel, lotus, white conch shell, *triratna* (triple jewel), and fire, so long it is not used destructively. Finally, there is the bell.

His consort, *Vishvamata*, also fails to make a pacifist impression. Of the eight symbolic objects which she holds in her eight hands, six are aggressive or morbid, and only two, the lotus and the triple jewel, signify happiness and well-being. Among her magical defense weapons are the cleaver, *vajra* hook, a drum made from human skulls, skull bowls filled with hot blood, and prayer beads made out of human bones. To signalize that she is under the control of the androcentric principle, each of her four heads bears a crown consisting of a small figure who represents the male Dhyani Buddha, *Vajrasattva*. As far as the facial expressions of the time goddess can be deciphered, above all they express sexual greed.

Both principal deities, *Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata*, stand joined in union in the so-called at-ease stance, which is supposed to indicate their preparedness for battle and willingness to attack. The foundation is composed of four cushions. Two of these symbolize the sun and moon, the other two the imaginary planets, *Rahu* and *Kalagni*. *Rahu* is believed to swallow both of the former heavenly bodies and plays a role within the *Kalachakra* rituals which is just as prominent as that of *Kalagni*, the apocalyptic fire which destroys the world with flame. The two planets thus have an extremely aggressive and destructive nature. Beneath the feet of the time couple two Hindu gods are typically shown being trampled, the red love god *Kama* and the white terror god *Rudra*. Their two partners, *Rati* and *Uma*, try in vain to rescue them.

Consequently, the entire scenario of the *Kalachakra Tantra* is warlike, provocative, morbid, and hot-tempered. In examining its iconography, one constantly has the feeling of being witness to a massacre. It is no help against this when the many commentaries stress again and again that aggressive ritual objects, combative body postures, expressions of rage, and wrathful deeds are necessary in order to surmount obstacles which block the individual's path to enlightenment. Nor, in light of the pathological compulsiveness with which the Tantric attempts to drive out horror with horror, is the affirmation convincing, that Buddha's wrath is compensated for by Buddha's love and that all this cruelty is for the benefit of all suffering beings.

The aggressiveness of both partners in the tantras remains a puzzle. To our knowledge it is not openly discussed anywhere, but rather accepted mutely. In the Highest Tantras we can all but assume the principle that the loving couple as the wrathful- warlike and turbulent element finds its counterpoint in a peaceful and unmoving Buddha in meditative posture. In the light of this tantric iconography one has the impression that the *vajra* master prefers a hot and aggressive sexuality with which to effect the transformation of erotic love into power. Perhaps the Dutch psychologist, Fokke Sierksma, did not lie so wide of the mark when he described the tantric

performance as “sadomasochistic”, whereby the sadistic role is primarily played by the man, whilst the woman exhibits both compulsions together. At any rate, the energy set free by “hot sex” appears to be an especially sought-after substance for the yogis’ “alchemic” transformative games, which we will come to examine in more detail later in the course of our study.

The poetry and beauty of mystic sexual love is far more often (even if not at all consistently) expressed in the words of the Highest Tantra texts, than in the visual representations of a morbid tantric eroticism. This does not fit together somehow. Since at the end of the sexual magic rituals the masculine principle alone remains, the verbal praise of the goddess, beauty and love could also be manipulative, designed to conjure up the devotion of a woman. Bearing in mind that the method (*upaya*) of the yogis can also be translated as “trick”, we may not exclude such a possibility.

### Western criticism

In the light of the unconcealed potential for violence and manifest obsessions with power within Tantric Buddhism it is incomprehensible that the idea has spread, even among many Western authors and a huge public too, that *Vajrayana* is a religious practice which exclusively promotes peace. This seems all the more misled since the whole system in no way denies its own destructiveness and draws its entire power from the exploitation of extremes. In the face of such inconsistencies, some keen interpreters of the tantras project the violent Buddhist fantasies outwards, by making Hinduism and the West responsible for aggression and hunger for power.

For example, the Tibetologist of German origins, Herbert Guenther (born 1917), who has been engaged in an attempt to win philosophical respectability for *Vajrayana* in Europe and America since the 60s, sharply attacks the Western and Hindu cultures: “this purely Hinduistic power mentality, so similar to the Western dominance psychology, was generalized and applied to all forms of Tantrism by writers who did not see or, due to their being steeped so much in dominance psychology, could not understand that the desire to realize Being is not the same as the craving for power” (Guenther, 1976, p. 64). The sacred eroticism of Buddhism is completely misunderstood in the west and interpreted as sexual pleasure and exploitation. “The use of sexuality as a tool of power destroys its function”, this author tells us and continues, “Buddhist Tantrism dispenses with the idea of power, in which it sees a remnant of subjectivistic philosophy, and even goes beyond mere pleasure to the enjoyment of being and of enlightenment unattainable without woman” (Guenther, 1976, 66).

Anagarika Govinda (1898-1985), also a German converted to Buddhism whose original name was Ernst Lothar Hoffmann and who believed himself to be a reincarnation of the German romantic Novalis, made even greater efforts to deny a claim to power in Tibetan Buddhism. He even attempted, with — when one considers the print run of his books — obviously great success, to cleanse *Vajrayana* of its sacred sexuality and present it as a pure, spiritual school of wisdom.

Govinda also gives the Hindus the blame for everything bad about the tantras. *Shakti* — the German lama says — mean power. “United with *Shakti*, be full of power!”, it says in a Hindu tantra (Govinda, 1984, p. 106). “The concept of *Shakti*, of divine power,” — the author continues — “plays absolutely no role in Buddhism. Whilst in tantric Hinduism the concept of power lies at the center of concern” (Govinda, 1984, p. 105). Further, we are told, the Tibetan yogi is free of all sexual and power fantasies. He attains union exclusively with the “eternal feminine”, the symbol for “emotion, love, heart, and compassion”. “In this state there is no longer anything ‘sexual’ in the time-honored sense of the word ...” (Govinda, 1984, p. 111).

Yet the feminist critique of *Vajrayana*, which Miranda Shaw presented in her book on “Women in Tantric Buddhism” published in 1994, appears even more odd. With reference to Herbert Guenther she also judges the interpretation of authors who reveal Tantrism to be a sexual and spiritual exploitation of the woman, to be a maneuver of “western dominance psychology”. These “androcentric” scholars reiterate a prejudice embedded deeply within western culture, which says that men are always active, women in contrast passive victims; men are power conscious, women are powerless; men are molded by intellect, women by emotion. It was suggested that women did not possess the capacity to practice tantric Yoga (Shaw, 1994, p. 9).

It is no surprise that the “militant Tantric” Miranda Shaw argues thus, then from the first to the last line of her committed book she tries to bring the proof that women were in no way inferior to the great gurus and *Maha Siddhas*. The apparently meager number of “yoginis” to be found in the history of *Vajrayana*, compared that is to the literally countless assembly of tantric masters, are built up by the author into a spiritual, female super-elite. The women from the founding phase of Tantrism — we learn here — did not just work together with their male partners as equals, rather they were far superior to them in their knowledge of mysteries. They are the actual “masters” and Tantric Buddhism owes its very existence to them. This radical feminist attempt to interpret Tantrism as an originally matriarchal cult event, is however, not entirely unjustified. Let us briefly trace its footsteps.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] In the usual *yab–yum* representation of the Dhyani Buddhas, the male Buddha figure always crosses both of his arms behind the back of his wisdom consort, forming what is known as the *Vajrahumkara* gesture. At the same time he holds a *vajra* (the supreme symbol of masculinity) in his right hand, and a *gantha* (the supreme symbol of femininity) in his left. The symbolic possession of both ritual objects identifies him as the lord of both sexes. He is the androgyne and the *prajna* is a part of his self.

## 5. PURE SHAKTISM, TANTRIC FEMINISM, AND ALCHEMY

In order to understand the “theological” intentions of *Vajrayana* and its iconography and psychology, it is of great value to draw a comparison to the matriarchal and gynocentric goddess cults of India. The high tensions and explosive forces in the sexual magic scenarios of the tantras can only be explained in the light of the conflicting manner in which the two cultural currents treat the dynamic between the sexes. To our knowledge there is no culture where the sexes have as theocratic systems given rise to such sophisticated and complex power struggles as in Indian — up to and including the present day.

Heinrich von Glasenapp calls *pure Shaktism* the contrary counter-force to androcentric Buddhism: “pure, hundred-percent Shaktism is the teaching of all those sects which regard *Durga* or one of her forms as the mistress of the world” (von Glasenapp, 1940, p. 123). *Durga*, that is just another name for the goddess *Kali*. She is worshipped by her followers as the highest universal deity. All other gods, whether masculine or feminine, emerge from her. She has both pleasant and horrific characteristics, but the dark and cruel traits predominate. She is traditionally linked to a destructive, man-destroying sexuality. She epitomizes forbidden sex, destructive rage, and death. Terror and madness count among her characteristics and it is believed her out and out destructiveness will one day reduce the world to rubble. Our era, which Hindus and Buddhists equally consider to be the “dark” one, and which is rushing headlong and inevitably towards its downfall, bears the name of this fearsome goddess — *Kali yuga*.

*Kali* appears to her believers as *Shakti*, that is as feminine energy in the form of a universal female divinity. In her omnipotence “she includes both the spiritual and the material principles and can therefore be understood to contain both the soul and nature ... The feminine principle creates the cosmos in combination with the masculine principle— though the masculine is always of secondary importance and subordinate to the feminine principle...” — reports the tantra researcher Agehananda Bharati (Bharati, 1977, p. 174).

Here the androcentric Wheel of Time has been rotated 180 degrees and Tantrism’s patriarchal pattern of dominance has been reinterpreted matriarchally. Instead of shaven-headed monks or long-haired *Maha Siddhas*, women now celebrate as “priestesses and female shamans”. The omnipotent divinity now reveals itself to be a woman. “Thus the followers of the Shakti school justify their appellation by the belief that god is a woman and it ought to be the aim of all to become a woman” (Bhattacharyya, 1982, p. 109) — writes Bhattacharyya in his history of the tantric currents.

## The gynocentric male sacrifice

According to one widely distributed view, the matriarchal element and goddess cult are believed to have been predominant for centuries in Indian society and can still now be discovered in folk culture (Bhattacharya, 1982, p. 116, note 41; Tiwari 1985). The native inhabitants of the first pre-Aryan agricultural societies were followers of the “great goddess”. Ritual objects from excavations of the ancient towns of Mohenjodaro and Harappa (c. 2500 B.C.E.) indicate that matriarchal cults were practiced there. Astounding parallels to the Babylonian goddesses of the Fertile Crescent have been drawn.

Only following the violent intrusion of patriarchal pastoral peoples from the north (around 1500 B.C.E.) was the native religion of India systematically displaced. From now on the Aryan caste system with its sacrificial priests (Brahmans) and warriors (Kshatriyas) at its peak determined social religious politics. Nor did the first phase of Buddhism show any essential change in the androcentric pattern. At the time of the Maurya and Gupta periods (around 300 C.E.) this experienced a decisive transformation. The ascetic doctrine of early Buddhism (*Hinayana*) gave way to the ideal of the compassionate Bodhisattva (*Mahayana*). Hinduism’s colorful lineage of gods developed — often represented as great mythical couples. But the archeologists have also excavated numerous clay figures from this epoch, which depict the Great Mother deity. Her figure even appears on coins. The submerged “feminine principle” of the earliest times thus reappeared between the third and seventh centuries C.E. in India.

Starting among the rural population it gained access to even the highest strata. “The mass strength behind it,” Bhattacharyya informs us, “placed goddesses by the side of gods of all religions, but even by doing so the entire emotion centering round the Female Principle could not be channelised. So the need was felt for a new religion, entirely female dominated, a religion in which even the great gods like Visnu or Shiva would remain subordinated to the goddess. This new religion came to be known as Shaktism” (Bhattacharyya, 1982, p. 207).

The Buddhists were also not in a position to remain completely untouched by this renaissance of ancient female cults. This can be detected, for example, in the famous collection of poems, *Therigatha*, where Buddhist nuns sing of their liberation from the slavery of everyday family life. But there was never a real emancipation movement of female Buddhists. In contrast the followers of the Buddha Shakyamuni were successful in their epochal attempt to gain control of the “new women”, through integration and manipulation, without needing to combat or suppress the emergent “woman power” directly: the monks discovered *Vajrayana*.

There is much to be said for the suggestion the tantric practices, or at least similar rites, were originally part of the cult of worship of the great goddess, which in contrast to early Buddhism had a completely free and open attitude towards sexuality. This is also admitted implicitly by the Buddhist yogis when they project all the forces of the universes into a female archetype. Since they were convinced they possessed a technique (*upaya*) which in the final instance placed

absolute power over the goddess in their hands, they could maintain this apparent omnipotence of the feminine without risk. One almost has the impression that they deliberately adopted the omnipotent matriarchal image.

Yet as soon as women actually grasped for power, this was seen by all the androcentric cults of India as a great disaster and much feared. The woman then appears as a bestial horror god or a bloodthirsty tigress who kills her lover, performs bizarre dances upon his corpse or places the still-aroused penis of the dead in her vulva. She is depicted as a being with a gaping maw and bloody canines. Numerous variants of such macabre portraits are known. In the light of such images of horror the fears of the men were thoroughly justified and man-destroying cult sacrifices were then no rarity in the vicinity of the black *Kali*.

The religious studies scholar Doniger O'Flaherty traces them all back to the archetypal ritual of an insect, which bears the name of "preying mantis". This large locust bites off the head of the smaller male during copulation and then consumes it with relish (O'Flaherty, 1982, p. 81). Although the tales do not say that the goddess rips off the head of her lover with her teeth, she does decapitate him with a saber.

Such female cults are supposed to imitate vegetative events in nature. Just as the plants germinate, sprout, blossom, bear fruit and then die back to arise anew from seed, so death appeared to them to be a necessary aspect of life and the precondition for a rebirth. When the ancient cosmocentric mother goddess donates fertility, she demands in return bloody sacrifices. It was mostly animals and humans of male gender who had to surrender their lives to preserve and propagate the plant, animal and human kingdoms (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 102; Neumann, 1949, p. 55). It is not said, however, whether this vegetative orientation to the cult was the sole motive or whether there was not also a bloody demonstration of power within a religiously motivated struggle between the sexes involved.

The cruel rites of *Kali* in no way belong to the past. As the Indian press currently reports, in recent times more and more incidents of human sacrifice to the goddess have accumulated, in which it is primarily children who are offered up. The ancient and universal myth of the Earth Mother, who consumes her own progeny and fattens herself with their corpses, who greedily laps up the blood-seed of humans and animals, who lures life into her abyss and dark hole in order to destroy it, is actually celebrating a renaissance in contemporary India (Neumann, 1989, pp. 148–149).

### **The vajra and the double-headed ax**

Initially, men may have reacted with fear and then with protestation to such bloody matriarchal rites, as we can conclude from many patriarchal founding myths. Perhaps some kind of masculine

anxiety neurosis, derived from long forgotten and suppressed struggles with matriarchy, lies hidden behind the seemingly pathological overemphasis accorded to the *vajra* and thus the “phallus” in Tantric Buddhism?

In a cultural history of the “diamond scepter” (*vajra*), the Tibetologist Siegbert Hummel mentions that the *vajra* was worshipped both in Vedic India and among the Greeks as a lightning symbol. The symbol entered Buddhism via the Hellenistic influence on the art of Gandhara. The current form only evolved over the course of centuries. Formerly, the *vajra* more resembled a “double-headed ax with lightning-like radiance” (Hummel, 1954, pp. 123ff.).

Hummel, who has also examined matriarchal influences on Tibetan culture in other works, surmises that the symbol had a Cretan gynocentric origin. But let us quote him directly: “*Vajra*” and “double-headed ax” presuppose “images of the Cretan mother deity, who carries a double-headed ax, as not just a sign but also an embodiment of her sovereignty and power as well as a magical instrument, a privilege, incidentally, which male deities significantly did not receive” (Hummel, 1954, p. 123). The Minoan cult object is said to have been used as a weapon with which the sacred bull was slaughtered.

This bovine blood ritual, which according to reports and myths of antiquity was widely distributed among the matriarchal cults of the Near East, brings the ancient male sacrifice into the discussion once more. Then the bull is considered a historically more recent substitute for the husband of the tribal queen, who herself was supposed to be the incarnation of a goddess. Following the expiry of his period in office, the priestesses sacrificed him and soaked the soil with his royal blood in order to generate fertility.

Aside from this, it is highly likely that ancient castration were linked with the double-headed ax (Hummel, 1954, pp. 123ff.). At any rate, the almighty *Cybele* bore this sharp implement as her emblem of power. Classical authors report with horror how the fanatical priests of this Phrygian mother-goddess let themselves be ritually emasculated or performed the mutilation themselves. “Cybelis” is said to be a translation of “double-headed ax” (Alexiou, n.d., p. 92).

If we accept Hummel’s account of the origin of the *vajra* as the man-destroying scepter of the great goddess, then the excessive reverence with which the Tantric Buddhists treat the “thunderbolt” becomes more comprehensible: The ax, which once felled or mutilated man has now become his most-feared magical weapon, with which he graphically demonstrates his victory over the great goddess.

In the *vajra*, the “diamond scepter”, “thunderbolt” or “phallus”, the androcentric control of the world is symbolized. It represents the superiority of the masculine spirit over the feminine nature. “The *vajra*”, Lama Govinda writes, “became ... the quintessence of supreme spiritual, a power which nothing can withstand and which is itself unassailable and invincible: just as a diamond, the hardest of all substances, can cut to pieces all other substances without itself being cut by anything else” (Govinda, 1991, p. 65). In order to demonstrate this omnipotence of absolute masculinity, there arose within “*Vajrayana*” the linguistic obsession which links all the events and protagonists of the tantric rituals to the word *vajra*.

It is not just the objects which are ceremonially sacrificed, like *vajra*-incense, *vajra*-shells, *vajra*-lamps, *vajra*-perfumes, *vajra*-flowers, *vajra*-flags, *vajra*-dresses and so forth which bear the Sanskrit name of the “diamond scepter”, but also all the ritual activities such as *vajra*-music, *vajra*-dance, *vajra*-motion, *vajra*-gestures. “The whole of this system pivots upon the idea of the *vajra*, which is the supreme ideal, but at the same time environs the initiate from his first steps. Everything which concerns the mystique training bears this name. The water of the preliminary purification, the pot that contains it, the sacred formula to repeat over it ... all is *vajra*” (Carelli, 1941, p. 6).

Even the symbol of supreme femininity, the “emptiness” (*shunyata*), is not spared its application. “The *vajra* represents the active principle,” writes Snellgrove, “the means towards enlightenment and the means of conversion, while the bell represents Perfection of Wisdom, known as the Void (*sunyata*). In the state of union, however, the *vajra* comprehends both these coefficients of enlightenment, the means and the wisdom” (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 131). “*Shunyata*”, we can read in Dasgupta, “which is firm, substantial, indivisible and impenetrable, incapable of being burnt and imperishable, is called *Vajra*... *Vajra* ... is the void and in *Vajrayana* everything is *Vajra*” (Dasgupta, 1974, pp. 77, 72).

*Vajra* and the “bell” (*gantha*) count as the two most important ritual objects in Tantrism. But here too the masculine “thunderbolt” has achieved supremacy. This is most graphically expressed in the symbolic construction of the feminine “bell”. In order to display its subordinacy to the masculine principle, it always possesses a handle in the form of a half *vajra*. One will also not find a *gantha*, which does not have numerous tiny “diamond scepters”, i.e., “phalluses”, engraved on its outer edge. The bell, visible and much-praised symbol of the feminine, is thus also under the hegemony of the “thunderbolt”.

The gesture of dominance with which the tantric master seals his consort during the sexual act is called the *Vajrahumkara mudra*: he crosses both hands behind the back of his partner, with the *vajra* held in his right hand, and the *gantha* in the left. The symbolic content of this gesture can only be the following: the yogi as androgyne is lord over both sexual energies, the masculine (symbolized by the *vajra*) and the feminine (symbolized by the *gantha*). In encircling (“sealing”) his wisdom consort with the androgyne gesture, he wishes to express that she is a part of his self, or rather, that he has absorbed her as his *maha mudra* (“inner woman”).

## The dakini

Among the noisy retinue of *Kali* can, in Hindu accounts, be found a cluster of lesser female demons known as *dakinis*. As we have already seen, these also play an indispensable role in the salvational practices of Buddhist Tantrism. The “sky walkers” — as their name can be translated — are less a female species of angel; rather, they are primarily a subordinate class of female devils. Since they originally belonged to the *Kali* milieu, their historically more recent transformation into a Buddhist support unit must surely provide some interesting insights into the early history of Tantrism and its relation to the gynocentric cults.

The dakinis have a preference for hanging around crematoria. Their favorite fare is human flesh, which they use for magical purposes in their rituals. They visit sickness upon women, men, and children, especially fever, obsessions, consumption, and sterility. Like the European witches they fly through the air and assume the most varied animal forms. They thus torment those around them as cats, poisonous snakes, lionesses and bitches. They are reviled as “noise-makers, women who take away, hissers, and flesh-eaters”. As vampires, they suck up fresh blood and ritually consume menstrual discharge — their own or that of others. Like the Greek *harpies*, with whom they have much else in common, they devour afterbirth and feed themselves from corpses. They have a great predilection and craving for the male seed. These horror-women can even consume the breath of a living person (O’Flaherty, 1982, p. 237).

Their terrible appearance is described in a biography of the great Tibetan deliverer of salvation, Padmasambhava: some ride upon lions with their hair let out and carry skulls in their hands as signs of victory; others perch upon the backs of birds and let out shrill shrieks; the bodies of yet others are topped by ten faces and ten mouths with which they devour human hearts; a further group vomit up dogs and wolves; They generate lightning, and descend upon their victims with a thunderclap. “The trace of a third eye upon her forehead [can be found], they have long clawlike finger-nails, and a black heart in her vagina” (Stevens, 1990, p. 73). Ritual curved knives, with which they dismember corpses; a skull bowl out of which they slurp all sorts of blood; a small two-ended drum prepared from the brain-pans of two children, with which she summons her companions and a scepter, upon which three skulls are skewered, — are all considered part of a dakini’s standard equipment.



*Sculpture of a Dakini*

The dakinis normally only reveal themselves to the Tantric — either as human women in flesh and blood or as dream figures, or as ghosts. In the *bardo* state, the time between death and rebirth, however, they encounter everyone who has died in order to carry out their horrific sacrifices. The *Tibetan Book of the Dead* also calls them *gauris* and many individuals among them are named: *Ghasmari*, *Candali*, *Nari*, *Pukkasi* and so forth. They ride upon buffaloes, wolves, jackals and lions; wear the most varied human bones as jewelry; clasp banners of children's skin in their hands; their baldachins are made of human skin; they play their horrible melodies upon the hip bones of a Brahman girl from which they have fashioned flutes; as scepter one grasps the corpse of an infant, another rips the head of a man off and consumes it. With this dreadful display the “sky walkers” want to induce the spirit of the dead person to seek out in fear the protective womb of a human woman so as to be reborn. But should he courageously resist the frightful images, then he becomes freed from the “Wheel of Life” and is permitted to enter *nirvana*.

Consequently, the tantras urge that every adept procure for himself the arts and cunning of *Cakrasamvara*, the first Buddhist dakini subduer, in order to conquer and bind these female fiends, as he can only experience enlightenment by subjugating the demonesses. He then becomes lord over the feminine in general, precisely because this opposed him in its most terrible form as a death-goddess and he did not yield to it.

But the process has more than just a psychological dimension. Since the dakinis come from the army of the black *Kali*, for patriarchal Tantrism her subjugation is also a “theocratic” act. With

every victory over a “sky walker” the gynocentric cult of the great black goddess is symbolically overpowered by the androcentric power of the Buddha.

The methods employed in this act of conquest are often brutal. When the *Maha Siddha* Tilopa met the queen of the dakinis in her palace in the form of an attractive and graceful girl (a witch’s illusion), he did not let the demoness pull the wool over his eyes. He tore the clothes from her body and raped her (Sierksma, 1966, p. 112). In the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* the masculine Hauptgottheit draws the dakinis to him with skewers and diamond hooks which “shine like scorching flames”. We have already mentioned Albert Grünwedel’s surmise above, that the “sky walkers” were originally real women who were transformed into pliant spiritual beings via a “tantric fire sacrifice”. The possibility cannot be excluded that the reason they suffered their fiery “witches’ fate” was that before their “Buddhization” they offered their services to the terrible *Kali* as priestesses.

Whilst it is true, as the Tibetan historian Buston tells us, that the demonesses were subjugated by the tantric divinity *Cakrasamvara* and converted to Buddhism, their cruelty was only partially overcome by the conversion. Actually, from this point on, there are two types of dakini and it is not uncommon that the two represent contrary aspects of a single “sky walker”. The dark, repulsive form is joined by a figure of light, an ethereal dancing fairy, a smiling virgin. This goodly part took over the role of the *inana mudra* for the yogi, the amiable spiritual woman and transcendent bearer of knowledge. In the next chapter we discuss in more detail how such a division of dakinis into evil witches and good fairies represents a primary event in tantric (and alchemic) control techniques.

Thus the evil party among the dakinis did not need to surrender their pre-Buddhist terrors, and unlike the bloody *Erinyes* from the Greek sagas, did not transform themselves into peace-loving pillars of the state like the *Eumenides*. Rather, the horror dakinis offered their destructive arts in the service of the new Buddhist doctrine. They continued to play a role as forms in which the death-mother and her former mistress, *Kali*, whom an adept needed to subdue, could appear. Their terrible emergence has become a downright essential, albeit mortally dangerous, stretch to be traversed upon the path of tantric enlightenment. Only at the end of a successful initiation do the “demonesses” appear in the form of “female angels”.

For Lama Govinda, however, who constantly attempts to exorcise all “witches’ dances” out of Tibetan Buddhism, their light form is the only truth: for him, the *dakini* represents that element of the “ethereal realm” which we are unable to perceive with our senses, since the Tibetan name for the sky walker, *Khadoma*, is said to have this meaning (Govinda, 1984, p. 228). The European lama explains the *Khadomas* to be “meditative geniuses”, “impulses of inspiration, which transform natural force into creative genius” (Govinda, 1984, p. 228) — in brief, they operate as the muses of the yogis. Govinda’s view is not all that incorrect, but he describes only the result of a many-layered and very complicated process, in which the demonic dakini is transformed via the “tantric female sacrifice” described above into a soft and ethereal “sky walker”.

## Kali as conquered time goddess

Now is it just the wild former retinue of *Kali* which is subdued in Buddhist Tantrism, or is the dark goddess herself conquered? The Tibet researcher, Austine Waddell, has concluded on the basis of an illustration of the time god, *Kalachakra*, and his consort, *Vishvamata*, that we are dealing here with a representation of the Highest Buddha in union with the Hindu horror goddess *Kali*, who together do the devil's work (Waddell, 1934, p. 131). These days, his interpretation is considered amusing, and is often cited as a warning example of Western ignorance and arrogance. But in our view Waddell is absolutely correct, and he is able to help us understand the mystery hidden at the heart of the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

For the entire post-Vedic Indian culture (i.e., for both Hinduism and Buddhism), the goddess *Kali* represents the horror mother of our decadent last days, which bear her name as the *Kali yuga*. Therefore, she is the “mistress of history”. More comprehensively — she is considered to be the personification of manifest time (*kala*) itself. In translation, the word *kali* means both the feminine form of ‘time’ and also the color ‘black’. As such, for Hinduism the goddess symbolized the apocalyptic “black hole” into which the entire material universe vanishes at the end of time. The closer we draw to the end of a cosmic cycle, the thicker the “darkness” becomes.

Her male counterpole and Buddhist challenger, *Kalachakra*, attempts — one could conclude from Waddell's interpretation — to wrench the “Wheel of Time” from her, in order to himself become “Lord of History” and establish a worldwide androcentric Buddhocracy. In the current and the coming eon he wants that he and he alone has control over time. It is thus a matter of which of the two sexes controls the evolution of the complete polar universe — she as goddess or he as god? When the tantric master as the representative of the time god on earth succeeds in conquering the goddess *Kali*, then he has — according to tantric logic — cleared the way on his path to exclusive patriarchal world domination.

Aggression toward one another is thus the basis of the relation between the two gender-pretenders to the “time throne”. But the Buddhist *Kalachakra* god appears to proceed more cleverly than his Hindu opponent, *Kali Vishvamata*. Using magic techniques he understands how to goad the aggressive sexuality of the goddess and nonetheless bring it under his control.

We shall later see that it is also his intention to destroy the existing universe, which bears the name *Kali yuga*. For this reason he is extremely interested in the destructive aspects of time (*kali*) or, respectively, in the destructive power of the goddess, who can crush all forms of existence beneath her. “What is *Kalachakrayana*?”, a contemporary tantra commentator asks, and answers revealingly, “The word *kala* means time, death and destruction. *Kalachakra* is the wheel of destruction” (Dasgupta, 1974, p. 65).

## The “alchemic female sacrifice”

“The Kalachakra Tantra”, writes the American David Gordon White in his comprehensive history of Indian alchemy, “.... offers us the most penetrating view we have of any specifically Buddhist alchemical system” (White, 1996, p. 71). In the fifth chapter of the *Time Tantra*, the “great art” is treated as a separate discipline (Carelli, 1941, p. 21). In his commentary on the *Kalachakra* text, Pundarika compares the whole sexual magic procedure in this tantra with an alchemical work.

In India, alchemy was and still is a widely spread esoteric body of knowledge, and has been since the fourth century C.E. It is taught and employed as a holistic healing art, especially in *Ayurveda*. Alongside its medical uses, it was considered (as in China and the West) as the art of extracting gold (and thus wealth and power) from base substances. But over and above this, it was always regarded as an extremely effective means of attaining enlightenment. Indian yogis, especially the so-called *Nath Siddhas*, who had chosen the “great art” as their sacred technique, experienced their alchemic attempts not as “scientific” experimentation with chemical substances, but rather as a mystical exercise. They described themselves as followers of *Rasayana* and with the use of this term indicated that had chosen a special initiatory path, the “Path of Alchemy”. In their occult praxis they combined chemical experiments with exercises from *Hatha Yoga* and tantric sexual rites.

Arabic influences upon Indian alchemy are presumed, but the latter certainly predates these. Even older are the sophisticated alchemic–sexual magic experiments of the Taoists. For this reason, some important Western scholars of Asia, for example, David Gordon White, Agehananda Bharati, and Joseph Needham, are of the opinion that China could be considered a possible origin for both the “high art” and Indian Tantrism. On the other hand, European alchemy of early modern times (16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century) has so many similarities to the symbolic world of tantric-alchemic India, that — since a direct influence is difficult to imagine — one must either posit a common historical, most probably Egyptian, origin, or must assume that both esoteric currents drew upon the same archetypal reservoir of our collective unconsciousness. Most probably, both are the case.

In the West, the close relationship between occidental alchemy and Tantrism has been thematized by, among others, the religious studies scholar Mircea Eliade and Carl Gustav Jung, the depth psychologist. Jung more than once drew attention to the parallels between the two systems. His introduction to a quasi-tantric text from China with the title *Das Geheimnis der goldenen Blüte* [‘The Secret of the Golden Flower’] is just one example from many. Mircea Eliade also saw “a remarkable correspondence between Tantrism and the great western mysteriosophical [sic] current ..., in which at the beginning of the Christian era gnosis, hermetics, Greek/Egyptian alchemy and the traditions of the mysteries flowed together” (Eliade, 1985, p. 211). Of the more modern authors, it is primarily David Gordon White who deserves mention; he has exhaustively studied the close link between alchemic ideas and experiments and the Indian *Siddhas* (sorcerers) and their tantric practices. Without doubt, Tantrism and alchemy, whether of Indian or European provenance, share many fundamental images with one another.

Just like their oriental colleagues, the occidental alchemists expressed themselves in a twilight language (*sandhabhasa*). All the words, signs, and symbols, which were formulated to describe the experiments in their obscure “laboratories”, possessed multiple meanings and were only comprehensible to the “initiated”. Just as in some tantra texts, “secret” practices were represented by “harmless” images in the European treatises; this was especially true of the topic of erotic love and sexuality. This strong link to the erotic may appear absurd in the case of chemical experiments, but the alchemic world view was, just like that of Tantrism, dominated by the idea that our universe functions as the creation and interplay of a masculine and a feminine principle and that all levels of existence are interpenetrated by the polarity of the sexes. “Gender is in everything, everything has masculine and feminine principles, gender reveals itself on all levels”, we can read in a European treatise on the “great art” (Gebelein, 1991, p. 44).

This was also true for the sphere of chemical substances and compounds, the metals and elements. Both the tantric and the alchemic writings are therefore maps of the erotic imagination and anyone with a little speech psychology can recognize the pervasive sexual system of reference hidden in a hermetical text from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. At that time people did not have the slightest qualms about describing chemical processes as erotic events and erotic scenarios as chemical fusions. They behaved in exactly the same manner in the West as in the East.

Let us now examine tantric alchemy a little more closely. The Tibetan lama, Dragpa Jetsen, for example, distinguishes three aspects of the royal art: the “*Alchemy of life*: he can make his life last as long as the sun and moon[; the] *Alchemy of body*: he can make his body eternally be but sixteen years old[; and the] *Alchemy of enjoyments*: he can turn iron and copper into gold” (quoted by Beyer, 1978, p. 253). These three experiments, then, primarily concern two goals: firstly the attainment of immortality, and secondly the production of gold, that is, material wealth. Correspondingly, in a commentary on the *Kalachakra Tantra* we can read: “Then comes the practice of alchemy, which in this case means the production of gold through the use of the elixirs” (Newman, 1987, p. 120).

But for the “true” adept (whether Tantric or European alchemist) it was not just a matter of the actual yellow metal, but also the so-called “spiritual gold”. In the West this was understood to mean the “Philosopher’s Stone” or the “hermetical elixir”, which transformed the experimenter into a superman. Alchemy and Tantrism thus have the same spiritual goal. In order to achieve this, numerous processes of conversion were needed in the laboratory of the adept, which did not just take the form of chemical processes, but which the alchemist also experienced as successive transmutations of his personality, that is, his psyche was dissolved and then put together again a number of times in the course of the experimentation. *Solve et coagula* (dissolve and bind) is for this reason the first and most well-known maxim of the hermetical art. This principle too, controls the tantric ritual in numerous variants, as, say, when the yogi dissolves his human body in order to reconstruct it as a divine body.

Without going into numerous further parallels between Tantrism and the “great art”, we would like to concentrate here upon a primary event in European alchemy, which we term the “alchemic female sacrifice” and which plays an equally central role for the adept of the high art as the “tantric female sacrifice” does for the Tantric. There are three stages to be examined in this sacrificial event:

1. **The sacrifice of the “dark woman” or the “black matter” (*nigredo*)**
2. **The absorption of the “virgin milk” or *gynergy* (*albedo*)**
3. **The construction of the cosmic androgyne (*rubedo*)**

### **1. The sacrifice of the black matter (*karma mudra*)**

The starting point for an alchemical experiment is in both systems, the European and the Indian, the realm of coarse matter, the ignoble or base, so as to then transmute it in accordance with the “law of inversion” into something beneficent. This procedure is — as we have shown — completely tantric. Thus the Buddhist scholar, Aryadeva, (third century C.E.) can employ the following comparison: “Just as copper becomes pure gold when it is spread with a wonder tincture, so too will the [base] passions of the Knowing become aids to salvation” (von Glasenapp, 1940, p. 30). The same *tantric* view is taken up in the eighteenth century by the French adept Limojon de Saint-Didier, when he ascertains in his *Triomphe Hermétique* that, “the philosophers [alchemists] say, that one must seek perfection in imperfect things and that one finds it there” (Hutin, 1971, p. 25).

In European alchemy the coarse starting material for the experiments is known as the *prima materia* and is of a fundamentally feminine nature. Likewise, as in the tantras, base substances such as excrement, urine, menstrual blood, part of corpses and so forth are named in the alchemic texts, no matter which culture they belong to, as the physical starting materials for the experiments. Symbolically, the primal material is describe in images such as “snake, dragon, toad, viper, python”. It is also represented by every conceivable repulsive female figure — by witches, mixers of poison, whores, chthonic goddesses, by the “dragon mother” so often cited in depth psychology. All these are metaphors for the demonic nature of the feminine, as we also know it from as far back as the early phase of Buddhism. We may recall that Shakyamuni compared women in general with snakes, sharks and whores.

These misogynous terms for the *prima materia* are images which on the one hand seek to describe the untamed, death-bringing nature; on the other one readily admit that a secret force capable of producing everything in the phenomenal world is hidden within “Mother Nature”. Nature in alchemy has at its disposal the universal power of birth. It represents the primordial matrix of the elements, the *massa confusa*, the great chaos, from which creation bursts forth. , On this basis, Titus Burckhardt, an enthusiastic expert on the great art, brings the western *prima materia*

into direct comparison with tantric *Shakti* and the black goddess, *Kali*: “On the idea of *Shakti* are based all those tantric spiritual methods which are more closely related to alchemy than to any other of the spiritual arts. The Hindu, indeed, regard alchemy itself as a tantric method. As *Kali*, the *Shakti* is on the one hand the universal mother, who lovingly embraces all creatures, and on the other hand the tyrannical power which delivers them over to destruction, death, time, and space” (Burckhardt, 1986, p. 117). The alchemic first substance (*prima materia* or *massa confusa*) cannot be better personified in Tantrism than by *Kali* and her former retinue, the crematoria-haunting, horrifying dakinis

Experimenting around with the primal material sounds quite harmless to someone who is not initiated. Yet a symbolic murder is hidden behind this. The black matter, a symbol of the fundamental feminine and of powerful nature from which we all come, is burned or in some cases vaporized, cut to pieces or dismembered. Thus, in destroying the *prima materia* we at the same time destroy our “mother” or, basically, the “fundamentally feminine”. The European adept does not shy away from even the most crass killing metaphors: “open the lap of your mother”, it says in a French text from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, “with a steel blade, burrow into her entrails and press forward to her womb, there you will find our pure substance [the elixir]” (Bachelard, 1990, p. 282). Symbolically, this violent first act in the alchemic production is located within a context of sacrifice, death and the color black and is therefore called *nigredo*, that is “blackening”.

## 2. The absorption of the “virgin milk” or gynergy (*inana mudra*)

The “pure substance” or the “elixir”, which according to the quotation above is obtained from the entrails of Mother Nature, is in alchemy nothing other than the *gynergy* so sought after in Tantrism. Just like the Tantric, the alchemist thus draws a distinction between the “coarse” and the “sublime” feminine. After the destruction of the “dark mother”, the so-called *nigredo*, the second phase follows, which goes by the name of *albedo* (“whitening”). The adept understands this to mean the “liberation” of the subtle feminine (“pure substance”) from the clutches of the coarse “dragon” (*prima materia*). The master has thus transformed the black matter, which for him symbolizes the dark mother, following its burning or cutting up in his laboratory into an ethereal “girl” and then distilled from this the “pure Sophia”, the incarnation of wisdom, the “chaste moon goddess”, the “white queen of heaven”. One text talks “of the transformation of the Babylonian whore into a virgin” (Evola, 1993, p. 207).

Now this transmutation is not, as a contemporary observer would perhaps imagine the process to be, a purely spiritual/mental procedure. In the alchemist’s laboratory some form of black starting substance is in fact burned up, and a chemical, usually liquid substance really is extracted from this material, which the adept captures in a pear-shaped flask at the end of the experiment. The Indians refer to this liquid as *rasa*, their European colleagues as the “elixir”. Hence the name for Indian alchemy — *Rasayana*.

Even though all the interpreters in the discussion of the alchemic “virgin image” (the subtle feminine) are of the unanimous opinion that this is a matter of the spiritual and psychological source of inspiration for the man, this nevertheless has a physical existence as a magical fluid. The “white woman”, the “holy Sophia” is both an image of desire of the masculine psyche and the visible elixir in a glass. (In connection with the seed gnosis we shall show that this is also the case in Tantrism.)

This elixir has many names and is called among other things “moon dew” or *aqua sapientiae* (water of wisdom) or “white virgin milk”. The final (chemical) extraction of the wonder milk is known as *ablactatio* (milking). Even in such a concrete point there are parallels to Tantrism: In the still to be described “Vase initiation” of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, the ritual vessels which are offered up to the *vajra* master in sacrifice, represent the wisdom consorts (*mudras*). They are called “the vase that holds the white [the milk]” (Dhargyey, 1985, p. 8). Whatever ingredients this “moon dew” may consist of, in both cultural circles it is considered to be the elixir of wisdom (*prajna*) and a liquid form of *gynergy*. It is as strongly desired by every European adept as by every Tibetan tantric master.

We can thus state that, in Tantrism, the relation between the real woman (*karma mudra*) and the imaginary spirit woman (*inana mudra*) is the same as that between the dark mother (*prima materia*) and the “chaste moon goddess” (the feminine life-elixir or *gynergy*) in European alchemy. Therefore, the sacrifice of *karma mudra* (*prima materia*), drawn usually from the lower classes, and her transformation into a Buddhist “goddess” (*inana mudra*) is an alchemic drama. Another variation upon the identical hermetic play emerges in the victory of the *vajra* master over the dark horror dakini (*prima materia*) and her slaughter, after which she (*post mortem*) enters the tantric stage as a gentle, floating figure — as a nectar-giving “sky walker” (“the chaste moon goddess”). The witch-like cemetery whore has transformed herself into a sweet granter of wisdom.

### 3. The construction of the cosmic androgyne (*maha mudra*)

Following the consumption of the “virgin milk”, the drawing off of the *gynergy*, the ethereal feminine is dissolved in the imagination of the alchemist and now becomes a part of his masculine-androgyne being. Thus, the second sacrifice of the woman, this time as “Sophia” or as an independent “spiritual being” takes place here, then the goal of the opus is reached only when the adept, just like the Tantric, has completely obliterated the autonomy of the feminine principle and integrated it within himself. To this end he works on and destroys the “chaste moon goddess” or the “white woman” (*inana mudra*), once more through the element of fire. The Italian occultist, Julius Evola, has described this procedure in clear and unvarnished terms: in this phase “sulfur and fire become active again, the now living masculine exerts an influence on the substance, ... gains the upper hand over the feminine, absorbs it and transmits its own nature to it” (Evola, 1983, p. 435). Accordingly, the feminine principle is completely absorbed by the masculine. Somewhat more prosaically expressed, this means the alchemist drinks the “virgin milk” mentioned above from his flask.

In summary, if we compare this alchemical process with Tantrism once more, then we can say that the alchemist sacrifices firstly the feminine “mother of all” (*prima materia*), just as the Tantric sacrifices the real woman, the *karma mudra*. From the destruction of the *karma mudra* the *vajra* master then obtains the “spiritual woman”, the *inana mudra*, just as the alchemist obtains the “Sophia” from the destruction of the *prima materia*. Then the Tantric internalizes the “spiritual woman” as *maha mudra* (“inner woman”), just as the adept of alchemy takes in the “white virgin” in the form of the luck-bringing feminine “moon dew”.

Once the work is completed, in both cases the feminine disappears as an external, independent and polar correspondence to the masculine and continues to function solely as an inner force (*shakti*) of the androgyne tantra master, or androgyne alchemist respectively. Within alchemy this internalization of the feminine principle (i.e., the construction of the *maha mudra* in Tantrism) is known by the term *rubedo*, that is “reddening”.

Since the symbolic sacrifice of the woman in both cases involves the use of the element of fire, in alchemy just as in Buddhist Tantrism we are dealing with an androcentric fire cult. Within both contexts a bisexual, ego-centered super being is produced via magic rites — a “spiritual king”, a “grand sorcerer” (*Maha Siddha*), a powerful “androgyne”, the “universal hermaphrodite”. “He is the hermaphrodite of the initial being,” C. G. Jung writes of the target figure of the alchemic project, “which steps apart in the classic brother–sister pair and unites itself in the ‘conjunctio’” (Jung, 1975, pp. 338, 340). Consequently, the final goal of every alchemical experiment which goes beyond simple moneymaking is the union of the sexes within the person of the adept, in the understanding that he could then develop unlimited power as a man–woman. The identical bisexual definition of the occidental super being is mirrored in the self-concept of the Tantric, who following his mystic union (*conjunctio*) with the feminine — that is to say, after the absorption of the *gynergy* — is reborn as the “lord of both sexes”.

In the West, as in the East, he then experiences himself to be the “father and mother of his self” — as a “child of his self” (Evola, 1993, p. 48) — “He marries himself, he impregnates himself”. He becomes “known as the father and begetter of all, because in him lives the seed and template of all things” (Evola, 1993, p. 35) To put it in one sentence — the mystic king of alchemy is in principle identical with the tantric *Maha Siddha* (grand sorcerer).

It would spring the bounds of this study to examine further patterns which link the two systems to one another. We shall, however, return to this where it seems necessary. In our opinion, *all* the events of Tantrism can be rediscovered in one form or another in the symbolic scenario of alchemy: the eroticization of the universe, the deadly dangers which are associated with the unchaining of the feminine elements, the “law of inversion”, the play upon fire, the swallowing of the “moon” (of the feminine) by the “sun” (the masculine), the mystical geography of the body, the mantras and mandalas, the mysticism surrounding the planets and stars, the micro-macrocosmic theory, the dark light and the clear light, the staged apocalypse, the grasp for power over the universe, the despotism of the patriarchal hermit, and so forth. We would like to let the matter rest

with this list and close the chapter with a succinct statement from Lhundop Sopa, a contemporary Tibetan specialist on the *Kalachakra Tantra*: “Thus, the *Kalachakra* path becomes in the end like a kind of alchemy” (Newman, 1985, p. 150). Both systems are thus based upon the same original script.

## 6. KALACHAKRA: THE PUBLIC AND THE SECRET INITIATIONS

The *Kalachakra Tantra* (Time Tantra) is considered the last and most recent of all the revealed tantra texts (c. tenth century), yet also as the “highest of all *Vajrayana* ways”, “the pinnacle of all Buddhist systems”. It differs from earlier tantras in its encyclopedic character. It has been described as the “most complex and profound statement on both temporal and spiritual matters” (Newman, 1985, p. 31). We can thus depict it as the *summa theologia* of Buddhist Tantrism, as the root and the crown of the teaching, the chief tantra of our “degenerate era” (Newman, 1985, p. 40). Tsongkhapa (1357-1419), the significant reformer and founder of the Tibetan Gelugpa order, was of the opinion that anybody who knew the *Kalachakra Tantra* mastered all other secret Buddhist teachings without effort.

Even though all Tibetan schools practice the *Kalachakra Tantra*, there have always only been individual experts who truly command this complicated ritual. For the Yellow Hats (*Gelugpa*), these are traditionally the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. A small study group from the Namgyal monastery are available to assist the Dalai Lama in executing the ceremonies with technical knowledge.

The ritual consists of a public part and a secret part, staged by the participants behind closed doors. Pupils with little prior knowledge or even people with none may participate in the public initiations. In contrast, the secret initiations are only accessible for the chosen few.

Despite the elitist selection, the texts sometimes suggest that the possibility of reaching the highest level of enlightenment in the *Kalachakra Tantra* within a single lifetime lies open to everybody. The reality is otherwise, however. Of the hundreds who participate in a public event, one commentary states, in the end only one will say his daily prayer. Of the thousands just one will commence with the yoga praxis which belong to this tantra and of these, only a handful will be initiated into the most secret initiations (Mullin, 1991, p. 28). In the *Vimalaprabha*, the earliest commentary upon the original text, it is stated in unmistakable terms that laity (non-monks) may absolutely not set foot upon the path to enlightenment (Newman, 1987, p. 422).

But even if the supreme goal remains closed to him, every participant ought nevertheless to gain numerous spiritual advantages for himself from the ritual mass events. According to statements

by the Dalai Lama, karmic stains may thus be removed and new seeds for good karma begin to grow. The eager are beckoned by the prospect of rebirth in *Shambhala*, a paradise closely associated with the *Kalachakra* myth. At any rate the pupil has “the opportunity to bask in the bright rays of spiritual communion with the initiating lama, in this case His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and hopefully to absorb a sprinkling of spiritual energy from the occasion” (Mullin, 1991, p. 28). Since, according to the official version, the celebrant guru conducts the *Kalachakra* ritual for, among other things, the “liberation of all of humanity” and the “maintenance of world peace”, both the masses present at the spectacle and the individual initiates participate in this highly ethical setting of goals (Newman, 1987, p. 382).

Fundamentally, the Buddhist tantras are subdivided into father tantras, mother tantras, or non-dual tantras. In father tantras it is principally the “method” of creation of a divine form body (*vajrakaya*) with which the yogi identifies which is taught. Hence the production of the self as a divinity is central here. To this end the following negative attributes of the adept need to be transformed: aggression, desire, and ignorance.

The mother tantras primarily lay worth upon the creation of a state of emptiness and unshakable bliss, as well as upon the calling forth of the clear light. Here the yogi exclusively employs the transformation of sexual desire as a means.

The non-dual tantras are a combination of father tantras and mother tantras. The “creation of a divine form body” is thus combined with the “calling forth of the clear light” and “blissful emptiness”. Thus, the yogi wants to both appear as a powerful deity and attain the ability to rest unconditionally in a state equivalent to *nirvana* and to bathe himself in mystic light.

Since the *Kalachakra Tantra* promises all these possibilities of enlightenment, the famous Tibetan scribe, Buston (1290-1364), classified it as a non-dual tantra. His opinion did not remain uncontested, however. Another outstanding expert on the rituals, Kay-drup-jay (1385-1438) described it, as do the majority of Gelugpa authors, as a mother tantra.

A further classification subdivides the “Time Tantra” into an external, internal, and alternative section.

The “external” tantra describes the formation and destruction of the universe, includes treatises on astronomy and geography, and concerns itself with the history of the world, with prophecies

and religious wars. The reports on the magic realm of *Shambhala* are of great importance here. Emphasis is also placed upon astrology and the mathematical calculations connected with it. The entire national calendar and time-keeping methods of the Tibetans are derived from the astronomical and astrological system in the *Kalachakra*.

In contrast, the “internal” *Kalachakra* treats the anatomy of energy in the mystic body. From a tantric viewpoint, the body of every person is composed of not just flesh and blood but also a number of energy centers which are connected to one another by channels. Fluids, secretions, and “winds” flow through and pervade this complex network. Among the secretions, male semen and female menstrual blood play an important role.

In the “alternative” *Kalachakra* we get to know the techniques with which the yogi calls up, dissolves, or regulates these inner energy currents as needed. Further, how these can be brought into a magic relation to the phenomena of the external *Kalachakra* (sun, moon, and stars ...) is also taught here.

Since the Time Tantra belongs to the highest secret teachings (*Anuttara Yoga Tantra*), it may only be practiced by a chosen few. In the introduction to a contemporary commentary by Ngawang Dhargyey, we can thus read the following: “Sale and distribution of this book is restricted. We urgently request that only initiates into Highest Yoga Tantra and preferably into the *Kalachakra* system itself should read it. This caution is customary to the tradition, but to disregard it can only be detrimental” (Dhargyey, 1985, p. iii).

Such threatening gestures are a part of occult show business, then these days it is no longer even necessary to understand Tibetan or Sanskrit in order to dip into the tantras, since numerous texts plus their commentaries have been translated into European languages and are generally accessible. Even Dhargyey’s “forbidden” text (*A Commentary on the Kalachakra Tantra*) can be found in large public libraries. David Snellgrove, an outstanding and incorruptible interpreter of Tibetan religious history, snidely remarks of the widespread secretiveness also promoted by the lamas that, “There is nothing particularly secret about sexual yoga in the Highest Yoga Tantras; one merely has to read the texts” (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 269).

This was in fact different in the Tibet of old. The highest yoga teachings were not allowed to be printed, and could at best be distributed in handwriting instead. Even for monks it was very difficult to receive higher initiations, and these afforded a much longer preparation time than is usual in our day. Mass initiations were, in contrast to the present day, extremely rare occasions.

## The seven lower public initiations and their symbolic significance

Let us now turn to the various stages of initiation treated in the *Kalachakra Tantra* and their features and methods. What can be understood by the term initiation (*abhisheka*)? It concerns the transmission of spiritual energies and insights from a priest to an individual who has requested this of him. The initiation thus presupposes a hierarchical relationship. In its classic form, a master (guru or lama) communicates his knowledge and mystic powers to a pupil (*sadhaka*). This master too once sat facing his own guru before the latter likewise initiated him. The chains of the initiated, all of which can be traced back to the historical Buddha, are known as “transmission lines”. It is usual for the transmission to proceed orally, from ear to ear. This is thus also known as the “ear-whispered lineage” (Beyer, 1978, p. 399). But words are in no sense a necessity. The initiation can also proceed without speech, for example through hand gestures or the display of symbolic images.

Both forms of transmission (the oral and the nonverbal) still take place between humans. When, however, the Buddhist deities initiate the pupil directly, without a physical go-between, this is known as the “consciousness lineage of the victors”. The transcendent Buddhas (*Dhyani Buddhas*) who approach an earthly adept directly are referred to as “victors”. A subtype of such communication from beyond is known as the “trust lineage of the dakinis”. Here an adept discovers holy texts which were hidden for him in caves and mountain clefts by the dakinis in times of yore in order to instruct him following their discovery. Such “consciousness treasures”, also known as *termas*, generally provoked sharp criticism from the orthodox lamas, as they called into question their privilege of being the only source of initiation.

The *Kalachakra Tantra* is explicitly modeled upon the traditional Indian coronation ceremony (*Rajasuya*). Just as the *Rajasuya* authorizes the heir to the throne to take on the status of a king, so the tantric initiation empowers the adept to function as the emanation of a Buddhist deity. Of course, it is also not as a person that the lama communicates the divine energies to the initiand, but rather as a superhuman being in human form.

It is the pupil's duty to imagine his guru as a living Buddha (Tibetan *Kundun*) during the entire initiatory process. So that he never forgets the superhuman nature of his master, the *Kalachakra Tantra* prescribes a *Guruyoga liturgy*, which is to be recited by the initiand at least three times a day and three times per night. Several of these liturgies are hundreds of pages long (Mullin, 1991, p. 109). But in all of them words to the following effect can be found, with which the lama demands the pupil's (*sadhaka*) absolute obedience: “From henceforth I am your [deity] *Vajrapani*. You must do what I tell you to do. You should not deride me, and if you do, ... the time of death will come, and you will fall into hell” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1985, p. 242).

Since it is the goal of every tantric initiation that the *sadhaka* himself achieve a transhuman status, right from the outset of the initiatory path he develops a “divine pride” and, as the First Dalai Lama informs us, is transformed into a “vessel” in which the supernatural energies collect (Mullin, 1991, p. 102). This is also true for the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

### The self-sacrifice of the pupil

But doesn't a metaphysical contest now arise between the deity which stands behind the guru and the newly created pupil deity? This is not the case for two reasons. On the one hand, the divine being behind master and pupil forms a unity. One could even consider it characteristic of divine entities that they are simultaneously able to appear in various forms. On the other, it is not the pupil (*sadhaka*) who produces the deity; in contrast, he absolutely and completely loses his human individuality and transforms himself into “pure emptiness”, without having to surrender his perceivable body in the process. This empty body of the *sadhaka* is then in the course of the initiation occupied by the deity or the lama respectively. Chögyam Trungpa has expressed this in unmistakable terms: “If we surrender our body to the guru we are surrendering our primal reference point. Our body becomes the possession of the lineage; it is not ours any more. ... I mean that surrendering our body, psychologically our dear life is turned over to someone else. We do not have our dear life to hold any more” (June Campbell, 1996, p. 161). The pupil has completely ceased to exist as an individual soul and mind. Only his body, filled by a god or respectively by his guru, visibly wanders through the world of appearances.

The *Kalachakra Tantra* describes this process as an “act of swallowing” which the lama performs upon the initiand. In a central drama of the Time Tantra which is repeated several times, the oral destruction of the *sadhaka* is graphically demonstrated, even if the procedure does only take place in the imagination of the cult participants. The following scene is played out: the guru, as the *Kalachakra* deity, swallows the pupil once he has been melted down to the size of a droplet. As a drop the initiand then wanders through the body of his masters until he reaches the tip of his penis. From there the guru thrusts him out into the vagina and womb of *Vishvamata*, the wisdom consort of *Kalachakra*. Within *Vishvamata*'s body the pupil as drop is then dissolved into “nothingness”. The rebirth of the *sadhaka* as a Buddhist deity takes place only after this vaginal destruction. Since the androgyne *vajra* master simultaneously represents *Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata* within one individual and must be imagined by the adept as “father–mother” during the entire initiation process, he as man takes over all the sex-specific stages of the birth process — beginning with the ejaculation, then the conception, the pregnancy, up to the act of birth itself.

[1]

In a certain sense, through the use of his pupil's body the guru , or at least his superhuman consciousness, achieves immortality. So long the master is still alive he has, so to speak, created

a double of himself in the form of the sadhaka; if he dies then his spirit continues to exist in the body of his pupil. He can thus reproduce himself in the world of *samsara* for as long as there are people who are prepared for his sake to sacrifice their individuality and to surrender him their bodies as a home.

Accordingly, Tantrism does not develop the good qualities of a person in order to ennoble or even deify them; rather, it resolutely and quite deliberately destroys all the “ personality elements” of the initiands in order to replace them with the consciousness of the initiating guru and of the deity assigned to him. This leads at the end of the initiatory path to a situation where the tantra master now lives on in the form of the pupil. The latter has *de facto* disappeared as an individual, even if his old physical body can still be apprehended. It has become a housing in which the spirit of his master dwells.

### The lineage tree

The pupil serves as an empty vessel into which can flow not just the spirit of his master but also the lineage of all the former teachers which stretches back behind him, plus the deities they have all represented. It is all of these who now occupy the sadhaka’s body and through him are able to function in the real world.

In Lamaism, once anyone counts as part of the lineage of the High Initiates, they become part of a “mystic tree” whose leaves, branches, trunk, and roots consist of the numerous Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Tibetan/tantric pantheon. At the tip or in the middle of the crown of the tree the Highest Enlightenment Being (the ADI BUDDHA) is enthroned, who goes by different names in the various schools. The divine energy flows from him through every part to deep in the roots. Evans-Wentz compares this down-flow to an electric current: “As electricity may be passed on from one receiving station to another, so ... is the divine Grace ... transmitted through the Buddha Dorje Chang (*Vajradhara*) to the Line of Celestial Gurus and thence to the Apostolic Gurus on earth, and from him, to each of the subordinate Gurus, and by them, through the mystic initiation, to each of the neophytes” (Evans-Wentz, 1978, p. 9, quoted by Bishop, 1993, p. 118).

All of the high initiates are separated by a deep divide from the masses of simple believers and the rest of the suffering beings, who either prostrate themselves before the dynastic line tree in total awe or are unable to even perceive it in their ignorance. Yet there is still a connection between the timeless universe of the gurus and “normal” people, since the roots of the mystic tree are anchored in the same world as that in which mortals live. The spiritual hierarchy draws its natural and spiritual resources from it, both material goods and religious devotion and loving energy. The critical Tibet researcher, Peter Bishop, has therefore, and with complete justification, drawn attention to the fact that the mystic line tree in Lamaism takes on the appearance of a

bureaucratic, regulated monastic organization: “This idealized image of hierarchical order, where everything is evaluated, certified and allotted a specific place according to the grade of attainment, where control, monitoring and authorization is absolute, is the root-metaphor of Tibetan Buddhism” (Bishop, 1993, p. 118).

### **The first seven initiations**

All together the *Kalachakra Tantra* talks of fifteen initiatory stages. The first seven are considered lower solemnities and are publicly performed by the Dalai Lama and open to the broad masses. The other eight are only intended for a tiny, select minority. The Tibetologist Alexander Wayman has drawn a comparison to the Eleusian mysteries of antiquity, the first part of which was also conducted in front of a large public, whilst only a few participated in the second, secret part in the temple at night (Wayman, 1983, 628).

The seven lower initiations ought to be succinctly described here. They areas follows: the (1) the water initiation;(2) the crown initiation; (3) the silk ribbon initiation; (4) the vajra and bell initiation; (5) the conduct initiation; (6) the name initiation; and (7) the permission initiation. All seven are compared to the developmental stages of a child from birth to adulthood. In particular they serve to purify the pupils.

Before beginning the initiatory path the neophyte swears a vow with which he makes a commitment to strive for Buddhahood incessantly, to regret and avoid all misdeeds, to lead other beings along the path to enlightenment, and to follow absolutely the directions of the Kalachakra master. But above all he must visualize his androgyne guru as the divine couple, Kalachakra in union with his consort Vishvamata. With blindfolded eyes he must imagine that he is wandering through a three-dimensional mandala (an imaginary palace) which is occupied by the four meditation Buddhas (Amitabha, Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi, Vairochana) and their partners.

After his blindfold has been removed, he tosses a blossom onto a sacred image (mandala) spread out before him, which has been prepared from colored sand. The place where the flower comes to rest indicates the particular Buddha figure with which the pupil must identify during his initiation journey. In the following phase he receives two reeds of kusha grass, since the historical Buddha once experienced enlightenment as he meditated while seated on this type of grass. Further, the Lama gives him a toothpick for cleansing, as well as a red cord, which he must tie around the upper arm with three knots. Then he receives instructions for sleeping. Before he goes to bed he has to recite certain mantras as often as possible, and then to lay himself on his right side with his face in the direction of the sand mandala. Dreams are sent to him in the night which the guru analyzes another day. It is considered especially unfavorable if a crocodile swallows the pupil in his dream. The monster counts as a symbol for the world of illusions (samsara) and informs the

sadhaka that he is still strongly trapped by this. But via meditation upon the emptiness of all appearances he can dissolve all unfavorable dream images again.

Further instructions and rites follow which likewise concern purification. At the end of the first seven stages the Vajra master then dissolves the pupil into “emptiness” in his imagination, in order to then visualize him as his own polar image, as Kalachakra in union with Vishvamata. We should never forget that the androgynous tantric teacher represents both time deities in one person. Since the pupil possesses absolutely no further individual existence right from the beginning of the initiation, the two time deities are doubled by this meditative imagining — they appear both in the tantra master and in the person of the sadhaka.

We can thus see that already in the first phase of the Kalachakra initiation, the alternation between dissolution and creation determines the initiatory drama. The teacher will in the course of the rituals destroy his pupil many times more in imagination, so as to replace him with a deity, or he will instruct the sadhaka to perform the individual act of destruction upon himself until nothing remains of his personality. In a figurative sense, we can describe this destruction and self-destruction of the individual as a continually performed “human sacrifice”, since the “human” must abandon his earthly existence in favor of that of a deity. This is in no sense a liberal interpretation of the tantra texts; rather it is literally demanded in them. The pupil has to offer himself up with spirit and mind, skin and hair to the guru and the gods at work through him. Incidentally, these, together with all of their divine attributes, are codified in a canon, they can no longer develop themselves and exert their influence on reality as frozen archetypal images.

In the light of the entire procedure we have described, it seems sensible to remind ourselves of the thesis posed above, that the “production” of the deity and the “destruction” of the person stand in an originally causal relation to one another, or — to put it even more clearly — that the gods and the guru who manipulates them feed themselves upon the life energies of the pupil.

The first two initiations, the water and crown initiations, are directed at the purification of the mystic body. The water initiation (1) corresponds to the bathing of a child shortly after its birth. The five elements (earth, water, fire, air, and ether) become purified in the energy body of the sadhaka. Subsequently, the guru in the form of Kalachakra imagines that he swallows the initiand who has melted down to the size of a droplet, then thrusts him out through his penis into the womb of his partner Vishvamata, who finally gives birth to him as a deity. As already mentioned above, in this scenario of conception and birth we must not lose sight of the fact that the androgynous guru simultaneously represents in his person the time god and the time goddess. The complete performance is thus set in scene by him alone. At the close of the water initiation the master touches the initiand at the “five places” with a conch shell: the crown, the shoulder, the upper arm, the hip and the thigh. Here, the shell is probably a symbol for the element of water.

The crown initiation (2) which now follows corresponds to the child's first haircut. Here the so-called "five aggregates" of the pupil are purified (form, feeling, perception, unconscious structures, consciousness). By "purification" we must understand firstly the dissolving of all individual personality structures and then their "re-creation" as the characteristics of a deity. The procedure is described thus in the tantra texts; however, to be exact it is not a matter of a "re-creation" but of the replacement of the pupil's personality with the deity. At the end of the second initiation the vajra master touches the "five places" with a crown.

The third and fourth initiations are directed at the purification of speech. In the silk ribbon initiation (3), the androgynous guru once more swallows the pupil and — in the form of Vishvamata — gives birth to him as a god. Here the energy channels, which from a tantric way of looking at things constitute the "mystic framework" of the subtle body, are purified, that is dissolved and created anew. In the development of the human child this third initiation corresponds to the piercing of the ears, so that a golden ring can be worn as an adornment.

The vajra and bell initiation (4) follows, which is compared to the speaking of a child's first words. Now the guru cleanses the three "main energy channels" in the pupil's body. They are found alongside the spine and together build the subtle backbone of the adept, so to speak. The right channel becomes the masculine vajra, the left the feminine bell (gantha). In the middle, "androgynous" channel both energies, masculine and feminine, meet together and generate the so-called "mystic heat", which embodies the chief event in the highest initiations, to be described in detail later. The pupil now asks the Kalachakra deity, represented through the guru, to give him the vajra and the bell, that is, to hand over to him the emblems of androgyny.

Yet again, an act of swallowing takes place in the fifth initiation. The conduct initiation (5) corresponds to a child's enjoyment of the objects of the senses. Accordingly, the six senses (sight, hearing, smell, etc.) and their objects (image, sound, scent, etc.) are destroyed in meditation and re-created afterwards as divine characteristics. The vajra master ritually touches the pupil's "five places" with a thumb ring.

In the name initiation (6) which follows, the ordained receive a secret religious name, which is usually identical with that of the deity assigned to them during the preparatory rites. The guru prophecies that the pupil will appear as a Buddha in the future. Here the six abilities to act (mouth, arms, legs, sexual organs, urinary organs, and anus) and the six actions (speech, grasping, walking, copulation, urination, and defecation) are purified, dissolved and re-created. As seems obvious, the texts compare the naming of a child with the sixth initiation. The fifth and sixth initiations together purify the spirit.

The permission initiation (7) remains — which corresponds on the human level to the child's first lesson in reading. Five symbols (the vajra, jewel, sword, lotus, and wheel) which act as metaphors for various states of awareness in deep meditation are purified, dissolved and replaced. The androgynous guru swallows the pupil once more and as Kalachakra in union with his consort gives birth to him anew. He then hands him the vajra and the bell, as well as the five symbolic objects just mentioned, one after another. A river of mantras pours from the lama's mouth, flows over into the mouth of the pupil, and collects in his heart center. With a golden spoon the master gives him an "eye medicine", with which he can cast aside the veil of ignorance. He then receives a mirror as an admonition that the phenomenal world is illusory and empty like a reflection in a mirror. A bow and arrow, which are additionally handed to him, are supposed to urge him on to extreme concentration.

The ritual lays especial weight on the handing over of the diamond scepter (vajra). The guru says "that the secret nature of the vajra is the exalted wisdom of great bliss. Holding the vajra will recall the true nature of the ultimate vajra, or what is called 'method'" (Bryant, 1992, p. 165). Through this closing remark the tantra master forcefully evokes the masculine primacy in the ritual. In that the pupil crosses his arms with the vajra in his right hand and the feminine bell in his left (the Vajrahumkara gesture), he demonstrates his androgyny and his tantric ability to control the feminine wisdom energies (prajna) with "method" (upaya).

With this demonstration of dominance the seven lower initiations are ended. The adept can now describe himself as a "lord of the seventh level". With immediate effect he gains the right to disseminate the teaching of Buddha, albeit only within the limits of the lower initiations described. The vajra master thus calls out to him, "Turn the vajra wheel (teach the Dharma) in or to help all sentient beings" (Bryant, 1992, p. 164).

In the truest sense of the word the first seven solemnities are just the "foreplay" of the Kalachakra initiation. Then only in the higher initiations which follow does it come to sexual union with a real partner. The wisdom consorts of the seven lower levels are of a purely imaginary nature and no karma mudra is needed for their performance. Therefore they can also be given in public, even in front of great crowds.

### **The divine time machine**

So far, the vajra master and his pupil appear as the sole protagonists on the initiatory stage of the Time Tantra. Predominant in all seven initiation scenes is the uninterrupted consolidation of the position of the master, primarily depicted in the act of swallowing and rebirth of the initiand, that

is, in his destruction as a human and his “re-creation” as a god. We can therefore describe the “death of the pupil” and his “birth as a deity” as the key scene of the tantric drama, constantly repeated on all seven lower initiation levels. The individual personality of the sadhaka is destroyed but his visible body is retained. The guru uses it as a living vessel into which he lets his divine substances flow so as to multiply himself. The same gods now live in the pupil and the master.

But is there no difference between the guru and the sadhaka any more after the initiation? This is indeed the case when both are at the same level of initiation. But if the master has been initiated into a higher stage, then he completely encompasses the lower stage at which the pupil still finds himself. For example, if the initiand has successfully completed all seven lower solemnities of the *Kalachakra Tantra* yet the Kalachakra master is acting from the eighth initiation stage, then the pupil has become a part of the initiating guru, but the guru is in no sense a part of the pupil, since his of spiritual power skills are far higher and more comprehensive.

The initiation stages and the individuals assigned to them thus stand in a classic hierarchical relation to one another. The higher always integrate the lower, the lower must always obey the higher, those further down are no more than the extended arm of those above. Should, for example — as we suspect — the Dalai Lama alone have attained the highest initiation stage of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, then all the other Buddhists initiated into the Time Tantra would not simply be his subordinates in a bureaucratic sense, but rather outright parts of his self. In his system he would be the arch-god (the ADI BUDDHA), who integrated the other gods (or Buddhas) within himself, then since all individual and human elements of the initiand are destroyed, there are only divine beings living in the body of the pupil. But these too stand in a ranked relationship to one another, as there are lower, higher and supreme deities. We thus need — to formulate things somewhat provocatively — to examine whether the *Kalachakra Tantra* portrays a huge divine time machine with the Dalai Lama as the prime mover and his followers as the various wheels.

### **The four higher “secret” initiations**

The seven lower initiations are supposed to first “purify” the pupil and then transform him into a deity. For this reason they are referred to as the “stage of production”. The following “four higher initiations” are considered to be the “stage of perfection”. They are known as: (8) the vase initiation; (9) the secret initiation; (10) the wisdom initiation; and (11) the word initiation. They may only be received under conditions of absolute secrecy by a small number of chosen.

In all of the higher initiations the presence of a young woman of ten, twelve, sixteen, or twenty years of age. Without a living *karma mudra* enlightenment cannot, at least according to the original text, be attained in this lifetime. The union with her thus counts as the key event in the external action of the rituals. Thus, as the fourth book of the *Kalachakra Tantra* says with emphasis,

“neither meditation nor the recitation of mantras, nor the preparation, nor the great mandalas and thrones, nor the initiation into the sand mandala, nor the summoning of the Buddhas confers the super natural powers, but alone the *mudra*” (Grünwedel, *Kalacakra IV*, p. 226).

Further, in the higher initiations the adept is obliged to ritually consume the five types of meat (human flesh, elephant meat, horseflesh, dog, and beef) and drink the five nectars (blood, semen, menses ...).

In texts which are addressed to a broad public the vase initiation (8) is euphemistically described as follows. The *vajra* master holds a vase up before the *sadhaka*'s eyes. The adept visualizes a sacrificial goddess who carries the vase. The vessel is filled with a white fluid (Henss, 1985, p. 51). In reality, however, the following initiation scene is played out: firstly the pupil brings the lama a “beautiful girl, without blemish”, twelve years of age. He then supplicates to receive initiation and sings a hymn of praise to his guru. “Satisfied, the master then touches the breast of the *mudra* in a worldly manner” (Naropa, 1994, p. 190). This all takes place before the pupil's watchful gaze, so as to stimulate the latter's sexual desire.

According to another passage in the texts — but likewise in reference to the *Kalachakra Tantra* — the *vajra* master shows the undressed girl to the *sadhaka* and requires him to now stroke the breasts of the *karma mudra* himself (Naropa, 1994, p. 188). “There is not actually any vase or any pot that is used for this empowerment”, we are informed by Ngawang Dhargyey, a modern commentator on the Time Tantra. “What is referred to as ‘the pot’ are the breasts of the girl, which are called the ‘vase that holds the white’” (Dhargyey, 1985, p. 8). We have already drawn attention to the fact that this white substance is probably the same magic secretion from the female breast which the European alchemists of the seventeenth century enthusiastically described as “virgin's milk” and whose consumption promised great magical powers for the adept.

The sight of the naked girl and the stroking of her breasts causes the “descent” of the *semen virile* (male seed) in the pupil. In the tantric view of things this originally finds itself at a point below the roof of the skull and begins to flow down through the body into the penis when a man becomes sexually aroused. Under no circumstances may it come to the point of ejaculation here! If the pupil successfully masters his lust, he attains the eighth initiation stage, which is known as the “immobile” on the basis of the fixation of the semen in the phallus.

Let us now continue with the euphemistic depiction of the next secret initiation (9): The pupil is blindfolded. The master unites the masculine and feminine forces within himself and subsequently lets the adept taste the “mystic nectar”, which is offered to him in the form of tea and yogurt so

that he may experience great bliss (Henss, 1985, p. 52). In reality something different is played out on this level: firstly the adept hands valuable clothes and other sacrificial offerings over to the master. Then he presents him with a young and gracile girl. The lama demands that the sadhaka leave the room or blindfold himself. Tantric dishes are served, the master venerates and praises the *mudra* with songs of adulation, elevates her to the status of a goddess and then couples with her “until her sexual fluids flow” (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 121). He then, exceptionally, allows his semen to flow into her vagina.

The mixture of “red-white fluid” thus created, that is, of the male and female seed, is scooped out of the sexual organs of the wisdom consort with a finger or a small ivory spoon and collected in a vessel. The master then summons the pupil, or instructs him to remove his blindfold. He now takes some of the “holy substance” with his finger once more and moistens the tongue of the adept with it whilst speaking the words, “This is your sacrament, dear one, as taught by all Buddhas ... “ — and the pupil answers blissfully, “Today my birth has become fruitful. Today my life is fruitful. Today I have been born into the Buddha-Family. Now I am a son of the Buddhas” (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, p. 272). Concretely, this means that he has, through the consumption of the female and the male seed, attained the status of an androgyne.

But there are also other versions of the second initiation. When we read that, “The pupil visualizes the secret *vajra* of the *vajra* masters in his own mouth and tastes the white *bodhicitta* of the guru lama. This white *bodhicitta* sinks to his own heart chakra and in so doing generates bliss ... The name ‘secret initiation’ is thus also a result of the fact that one partakes of the secret substance of the *vajra* master” (Henss, 1985, p. 53; Dhargyey, 1985, p. 8), then this in truth means that the guru lays his sperm-filled penis in the mouth of the adept and the latter tastes the semen, since the “white bodhicitta” and the “secret substance” are nothing other than the *semen virile* of the initiating teacher.

In the wisdom initiation (10) which follows, the pupil is confronted with an even more sexually provocative scene: “... he is told to look at the spreading vagina of a knowledge lady. Fierce passion arises in him, which in turn induces great bliss” (Dalai Lama I, 1985, p.155). The tantra master then “gives” the sadhaka the girl with the words, “O great Being, take this consort who will give you bliss” (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 186). Both are instructed to engage in sexual union (Naropa, 1994, pp. 188, 190). During the ritual performance of the *yuganaddha* (fusion) the adept may under no circumstances let go of his semen.

The *Kalachakra Tantra* does not give away all of the secrets which are played out during this scene. It therefore makes sense to fall back upon other tantra texts in order to gain more precise information about the proceedings during the tenth initiation stage. For example, in the *Candamaharosana Tantra*, once the master has left the room, the *mudra* now provokes the pupil

with culinary obscenities: “Can you bear, my dear,” she cries out, “to eat my filth, and faeces and urine; and suck the blood from inside my *bhaga* [vagina]?” Then the candidate must say: “Why should I not bear to eat your filth, O Mother? I must practice devotion to women until I realize the essence of Enlightenment” (George, 1974, p. 55).

The final “word initiation” (11) is in a real sense no longer an initiation by the guru, as its name indicates it only exists in a literal form. It is thus also not revealed in any external scenario, but instead takes place exclusively within the inner subtle body of the former pupil, since the latter has already made the switch to a perfected consciousness and been transformed into a deity. A commentary upon the eleventh higher initiation thus belongs in the next chapter, which concerns the microcosmic processes in the energy body of the practitioner.

### **Sperm and menstrual blood as magic substances**

But before we continue with a discussion of the four highest initiations, we would like to make a number of reflections on the topic of sperm gnosis, which so decisively shapes not just the *Kalachakra* but rather all tantras. The same name, *bodhicitta*, is borne by both the male seed and the supreme mystic experience, that of the “clear light”. This already makes apparent how closely interlaced the *semen virile* and enlightenment are. The *bodhicitta* (“wisdom-mind”) is characterized by the feeling of “supreme bliss” and “absolute self-awareness”. A connection between both states of consciousness and the male sperm seems to be a necessity for the tantric, since, as we may read in the *Hevajra Tantra*, “without semen there would be no bliss and without bliss semen would not exist. Since semen and bliss are ineffective on their own they are mutually dependent and bliss arises from the union with the deity” (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 169).

In the tantras, the moon and water are idiosyncratically assigned to the male seed, which is idiosyncratic because both metaphors are of largely feminine character in terms of cultural history. We will need to look into this anomaly in Tantric Buddhism later. But a solar assignation of sperm is likewise known (Bharati, 1977, p. 237). The exceptional meaning which is accorded to the *semen virile* in *Vajrayana* has given rise to the conception among the Tibetan populace that, rather than blood, male seed flows in the veins of a high lama (Stevens, 1993, p. 90).

### **The retention of sperm**

For a Buddhist Tantric the retention of the male seed is the *sine qua non* of the highest spiritual enlightenment. This stands in stark opposition to the position of Galen (129–199 C.E.), the highest medical authority of the European Middle Ages. Galen was of the opinion that the *retentio semenis* would lead to a putrefaction of the secretion, and that the rotten substance would rise to the head and disturb the functioning of the brain.

In contrast, the tantras teach that the semen is originally stored in a moonlike bowl beneath the roof of the skull. As soon as a person begins to experience sexual desire, it starts to flow out, drop by drop, passing through the five energy centers (*chakras*). In each of these the yogi experiences a specific “seminal” ecstasy (Naropa, 1994, p. 191). The destination of the sperm’s journey within the body is the tip of the penis. Here, through extreme meditative concentration, the adept collects the lust: “The *vajra* [penis] is inserted into the lotus [vagina], but not moved. When lust of a transient art arises, the mantra *hum* should be spoken. ... The decisive [factor] is thus the retention of the sperm. Through this, the act obtains a cosmological dimension. ... It becomes the means of attaining enlightenment (*bodhi*)” (Grönbold, *Asiatische Studien*, p. 34). “Delight resides in the tip of the *vajra* [penis]”, as is said in a *Kalachakra* text (Grönbold, 1992a).

With the topic of sperm retention an appeal is made to ancient Indian sexual practices which date from pre-Buddhist times. In the national epic poem of the Indians, the *Mahabharata*, we can already read of ascetics “who keep the semen up” (Grönbold, *Asiatische Studien*, p. 35). In early Buddhism a holy man (*Arhat*) is distinguished by the fact that his discharges have been conquered and in future no longer occur. From *Vajrayana* comes the striking saying that “A yogi whose member is always hard is one who always retains his semen” (Grönbold, *Asiatische Studien*, p. 34). In contrast, in India the flowing of the male seed into “the fiery maw of the female sexual organ” is still today regarded as a *sacrificium* and therefore feared as an element of death (White, 1996, p. 28).

The in part adventurous techniques of semen retention must be learnt and improved by the adept through constant, mostly painful, practice. They are either the result of mental discipline or physical nature, such as through pressure on the perineum at the point of orgasm, through which the spermatid duct is blocked, or one stops the seminal flow through his breathing. If it nonetheless comes to ejaculation, then the lost sperm should be removed from the *mudra*’s vagina with the finger or tongue and subsequently drunk by the practitioner.

Yet that which is forbidden under penalty of dreadful punishments in hell for the pupil, this is not by a long shot the case for his guru. Hence, Pundarika, the first commentator upon the *Kalachakra Tantra*, distinguishes between one “ejaculation, which arises out of karma and serves to perpetuate the chain of rebirth, and another, which is subject to mental control ...” (Naropa, 1994, p. 20). An enlightened one can thus ejaculate as much as he wishes, under the condition that he not lose his awareness in so doing. It now becomes apparent why the *vajra* master in the second higher initiation (9) of the Time Tantra is able to without harm let his sperm flow into the vagina of the *mudra* so as to be able to offer the mixture (*sukra*) which runs out to the pupil as holy food.

### *The female seed*

As the female correspondence to male sperm the texts nominate the seed of the woman (*semen feminine*). Among Tantrics it is highly contested whether this is a matter of the menstrual blood or fluids which the *mudra* secretes during the sexual act. In any case, the sexual fluids of the man are always associated with the color white, and those of the woman with red. Fundamentally, the female discharge is assigned an equally powerful magic effect as that of its male counterpart. Even the gods thirst after it and revere the menses as the nectar of “immortality” (Benard, 1994, p. 103). In the old Indian matriarchies, and still today in certain *Kali* cults, the menstruating goddess is considered as one of highest forms of appearance of the feminine principle (Bhattacharyya, 1982, pp. 133, 134). It was in the earliest times a widespread opinion, taken up again in recent years by radical feminists, that the entire natural and supernatural knowledge of the goddess was concentrated in the menstrual blood.



***Menstruating Dakini***

Outside of the gynocentric and tantric cults however, a negative valuation of menstrual blood predominates, which we know from nearly all patriarchal religions: a menstruating woman is unclean and extremely dangerous. The magic radiation of the blood brings no blessings, rather it has devastating effects upon the sphere of the holy. For this reason, women who are bleeding may never enter the grounds of a temple. This idea is also widely distributed in *Hinayana* Buddhism. Menstrual blood is seen there as a curse which has its origins in a female original sin: “Because they are born as women,” it says in a text of the “low vehicle”, “their endeavors toward Buddhahood are little developed, while their lasciviousness and bad characteristics preponderate.

These sins, which strengthen one another, assume the form of menstrual blood which is discharged every month in two streams, in that it soils not just the god of the earth but also all the other deities too" (Faure, 1994, p. 182). But the Tantrics are completely different! For them the fluids of the woman bear Lucullan names like "wine", "honey", "nectar", and a secret is hidden within them which can lead the yogi to enlightenment (Shaw, 1994, p. 157)

According to the tantric logic of inversion, that precisely the worst is the most appropriate starting substance for the best, the yogi need not fear the magical destructive force of the menses, as he can reverse it into its creative opposite through the proper method. The embracing of a "bleeding" lover is therefore a great ritual privilege. In his book on Indian ecstatic cults, Philip Rawson indicates that "the most powerful sexual rite ... requires intercourse with the female partner when she is menstruating and her 'red' sexual energy is at its peak" (Rawson, 1973, p. 24; see also Chöpel, 1992, p. 191).

Astonishingly, the various types of menses which can be used for divergent magical purposes have been cataloged. The texts distinguish between the menstrual blood of a virgin, a lower-class woman, a married woman, a widow, and so on. (Bhattacharyya, 1982, p. 136) The time at which the monthly bleeding takes place also has ritual significance. In Tibet *yiddams* (meditation images) exist which illustrate dakinis from whose vaginas the blood is flowing in streams (Essen, 1989, vol. 1, p. 179).

In keeping with the Tantric's preference for every possible taboo substance, it is no wonder that he drinks the menses. The following vision was in fact perceived by a woman, the yogini Yeshe Tsogyal, it could however have been just as easily experienced by pretty much any lama: "A red lady, perfectly naked and wearing not even a necklace of bones, appeared before me. She placed her vagina at my mouth and blood flowed out of it which I drank with deep draughts. It now appeared to me that all realms were filled with bliss! The strength, only comparable to that of a lion, returned to me!" (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 281).

As has already been mentioned, the monthly flow is not always recognized as the substance yearned for by the yogi. Some authors here also think of other fluids which the woman releases during the sexual act or through stimulation of the clitoris. "When passion is produced, the feminine fluid boils", Gedün Chöpel, who has explored this topic intensively, tells us (Chöpel, 1992, p. 59). From him we also learn that the women guard the secret of the magic power of their discharges: "However, most learned persons nowadays and also women who have studied many books say that the female has no regenerative [?] fluid. Because I like conversation about the lower parts, I asked many women friends, but aside from shaking a fist at me with shame and laughter, I could not find even one who would give me a honest answer" (Chöpel, 1992, p. 61).

### *The sukra*

In the traditional Buddhist conception an embryo arises from the admixture of the male seed and the female seed. This red-white mixture is referred to by the texts as *sukra*. Since the fluids of man and woman produces new life, the following analogic syllogism appears as obvious as it is simple: if the yogi succeeds in permanently uniting within himself both elixirs (the *semen virile* and the *semen feminine*), then eternal life lies in store for him. He becomes a “born of himself”, having overcome the curse of rebirth and replaced it with the esoteric vision of immortality. With the red-white mixture he attains the “medicine of long life”, a “perfected body” (Hermanns, 1965, pp. 194, 195). *Sukra* is the “life juice” *par excellence*, the liquid essence of the entire world of appearances. It is equated with *amṛta*, the “drink of immortality” or the “divine nectar”.

Even if many tantric texts speak only of *bodhicitta*, the male seed, at heart it is a matter of the absorption of both fluids, the male and the female, in short — of *sukra*. Admittedly the mixing of the sexual fluids does seem incompatible with the prohibition against ejaculation, but through the so-called *Vajroli* method the damaging consequences of the emission of semen can be reversed, indeed this is considered a veritable touchstone of the highest yogic skill. Here, the tantra master lets his *bodhicitta* flow into his partner's vagina in order to subsequently draw back into himself through his urethra the male-female mixture which has arisen there. “After he has streamed forth,” Mircea Eliade quotes a text as saying, “he draws in and says: through my force, through my seed I take your seed — and she is without seed” (Eliade, 1985, p. 264). The man thus steals the seed of the woman under the impression that he can through this become a powerful androgynous being, and leaves her without her own life energy.

Some of the “initiated” even succeed in drawing up the *semen feminine* without ejaculating any sperm so as to then produce the yearned-for *sukra* mixture in their own body. The mastery of this method requires painful and lengthy exercises, such as the introduction of small rods of lead and “short lengths of solder” into the urethra (Eliade, 1985, p. 242). Here can be seen very clearly how much of a calculating and technical meaning the term *upaya* (method) has in the tantras. Yet this does not hinder the Tantric Babhaha from celebrating this thieving process in a poetic stanza:

In the sacred citadel of the vulva of  
a superlative, skillful partner,  
do the praxis of mixing white seed  
with her ocean of red seed.

Then absorb, raise, and spread the nectar—

A stream of ecstasy such as you've never known.

(quoted by Shaw, 1994, p. 158).

### Ejaculation

Now what happens if the yogi has not mastered the method of drawing back? Fundamentally, the following applies: “Through the loss of the *bindu* [semen] comes death, through its retention, life” (Eliade, 1985, p. 257). In a somewhat more tolerant view, however, the adept may catch the *sukra* from out of the vagina in a vessel and then drink it (Shaw, 1994, p. 157). It is not rare for the drinking bowl to be made from a human skull. The *Candamaharosana Tantra* recommends sucking the mixture up with a tube (pipe) through the nose (George, 1974, p. 75). If one sips the *sukra* out of his *mudra*'s genitals with his mouth, then the process is described as being “from mouth to mouth” (White, 1996, p. 200). Without exaggeration one can refer to this drinking of the “white-red *bodhicitta*” as the great tantric Eucharist, in which semen and blood are sacredly consumed in place of bread and wine. Through this oriental “Last Supper” the power and the strength of the women are passed over to the man.

Already, centuries before Tantrism, the nightly ejaculations of the Buddhist *Arhats* (holy men) were a topic of great debate. In Tantrism, a man who let his sperm flow was referred to as a *pashu*, an “animal”, whereas anyone who could retain it in the sexual act was a *vira*, a “hero”, and accorded the attribute *divya*, “divine” (Bharati, 1977, p. 1977 148).

We have already reported how ejaculation is equated simply with death. This too we already learn from the pre-Buddhist Upanishads. In fact, Indian culture is, in the estimation of one of its best interpreters, Doniger O'Flaherty, characterized by a deadly fear of the loss of semen far beyond the limits of the tantric milieu: “The fear of losing body fluids leads not only to retention, but to attempts to steal the partner's fluid (and the fear that the partner will try the same trick) — yet another form of competition. If the woman is too powerful or too old or too young, terrible things will happen to the innocent man who falls into her trap, a fact often depicted in terms of his losing his fluids” (O'Flaherty, 1982/1988, p. 56). Agehananda Bharati also shares this evaluation, when he writes in his book on the tantric traditions that, “the loss of semen is an old, all-pervasive fear in Indian tradition and probably the core of the strongest anxiety syndrome in Indian culture” (Bharati, 1977, p. 237).

The drawing up of sperm by a woman is viewed by a tantric yogi as a mortally dangerous theft and a fundamental crime. Is this purely a matter of male fantasies? Not at all — a gynocentric correspondence to the thieving seed-absorption is, namely, known from the *Kali* cults to be a ritual event. Here, the woman assumes the upper position the sex act and in certain rites leaves the

man whose life energies she has drained behind as a corpse. According to statements by the Tibet researcher, Matthias Hermanns, there were yoginis (female yogis) who received instruction in a technique “through which they were able to forcibly draw their partners’ semen from out of the penis”, and the author concludes from this that, “It is thus the counterpart of the procedure which the yogi employs to soak up the genital juices of several women one after another through his member” (Hermanns, 1965, p. 19). The theft of the male sperm in waking and in dream likewise counts as one of the preferred entertainments of the dakinis.

### *Alchemy and semen gnosis*

Before we continue with the initiation path in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, we would like to throw a brief glance over Indian alchemy and the sexual substances it employs, because this half-occult science by and large coincides with the tantric seed gnosis. The Sanskrit term for alchemy is *Rasa-vada*. *Rasa* means ‘liquid’ or ‘quicksilver’. Quicksilver was considered the most important chemical substance which was made use of in the “mystic” experiments, both in Europe and in Asia. The liquid metal was employed in the transformation of materials both in the east and the west, in particular with the intention of producing gold. In the Occident it bore the name of the Roman god, Mercury. The *Kalachakra Tantra* also mentions quicksilver at several points. The frequency with which it is mentioned is a result of its being symbolically equated with the male seed (*bodhicitta*); it was, in a manner of speaking, the natural-substance form of the *semen virile*.

It is a characteristic of quicksilver that it can “swallow” other substances, that is, chemically bind with them. This quality allowed the liquid metal to become a powerful symbol for the tantric yogi, who as an androgyne succeeds in absorbing — i.e., “swallowing” — the *gynergy* of his wisdom consort.

The corresponding feminine counterpart to mercury is sulfur, known in India as *Rasa-vada*, and regarded as a chemical concentrate of menstrual blood. Its magic efficacy is especially high when a woman has been fed sulfur twenty-one days before her menses. Both substances together, mercury and sulfur, create *cinnabar*, which, logically, is equated with *sukra*, the secret mixture of the male and female seed. In the Indian alchemic texts it is recommended that one drink a mixture of quicksilver and sulfur with semen and menstrual blood for a year in order to attain exceptional powers (White, 1996, p. 199).

Just how fundamental the “female seed” was for the *opus* of the Indian alchemists can be deduced from the following story. The yogi and adept Nagarjuna, highly revered by the Tibetans and a namesake of the famous founder of *Mahayana* Buddhism with whom he is often put on the same level, experimented for years in order to discover the elixir of life. Albert Grünwedel has therefore christened him the “Faust of Buddhism”. One day, fed up with his lack of success, he threw his

book of formulas into the river. It was fished out by a bathing prostitute and returned to the master. He saw this as a higher sign and began anew with his experimentation with the assistance of the hetaera. But once more nothing succeeded, until one evening his assistant spilt a liquid into the mixture. Suddenly, within seconds, the elixir of life had been created, which Nagarjuna had labored fourteen years in vain to discover.

Anyone who knows the tantras would be aware that the prostitute was a dakini and that the wonderful liquid was either the female seed or menstrual blood. Nagarjuna could thus only attain his goal once he included a *mudra* in his alchemical experiments. For this reason, among the Alchemists of India a “female laboratory assistant” was always necessary to complete the “great work” (White, 1996, p. 6).

There are also European manuals of the “great art” which require that one work with the “menstrual blood of a whore”. In one relevant text can be read: “Eve keeps the female seed” (Jung, 1968, p. 320). Even the retention of sperm and its transmutation into something higher is known in the west. Hence the seventeenth-century doctor from Brussels, Johannes Baptista Helmont, states that, “If semen is not emitted, it is changed into a spiritual force that preserves its capacities to reproduce sperm and invigorates breath emitted in speech” (Couliano, 1987, p. 102). Giordano Bruno, the heretic among the Renaissance philosophers, wrote a comprehensive essay on the manipulation of erotic love through the retention of semen and for the purposes of attaining power.

### **“Ganachakra” and the four “highest” initiations**

The initiation path of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, to which we now return following this detour into the world of seed gnosis, now leads us on to the four highest initiations, or rather to the twelfth to fifteenth initiation stages. The reader will soon see that we are dealing with an extended copy of the four “higher initiations” (8–11). They thus also bear the same names: (12) the vase initiation; (13) the secret initiation; (14) the wisdom initiation; and (15) the word initiation. The difference primarily consists in the fact that rather than just one *mudra*, ten wisdom consorts now participate in the ritual. All ten must be offered to the master by the pupil (Naropa, 1994, p. 193). There are different rules for monks and laity in this regard. It is required of a layman that the *mudras* be members of his own family — his mother, his sister, his daughter, his sister-in-law, and so on (Naropa, 1994, p. 192). This makes it *de facto* impossible for him to receive the *Kalachakra* solemnity. Although the same commandment applies to a monk, it is interpreted symbolically in his case. Hence, he has to deliver to his guru numerous girls from the lower castes, who then adopt the names and roles of the various female relatives during the ritual. Among other things the elements are assigned to them: the “mother” is earth, the “sister” water, the “daughter” fire, the “sister’s daughter” is the wind, and so on (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, p. 125).

After the pupil has handed the women over to his master, he is given back one of them as a symbolic “spouse” for the impending rites (Naropa, 1994, p. 193). There are thus ten women present on the tantric ritual stage — one as the “wife” of the sadhaka and nine as substitutes for the rest of his female relatives. The master now chooses one of these for himself. The chosen wisdom consort bears the name of *Shabdavajra*. It is prescribed that she be between twelve and twenty years old and have already menstruated. First the guru fondles the jewelry of the young women, then he undresses her and finally embraces her. The tantric couple are surrounded by the remaining eight women along with the pupil and his “spouse” in a circle. All the yoginis have a particular cosmic meaning and are assigned to among other things the points of the compass. Each of them is naked and has let down her hair so as to evoke the wild appearance of a dakini. In their hands the women hold a human skull filled with various repulsive substances and a cleaver (Naropa, 1994, p. 193/194).

The guru now moves to the center of the circle (*chakra*) and performs a magic dance. Subsequently he unites with *Shabdavajra* in the divine yoga, by inserting “the jewel of his *vajra*” (his phallus) into her (Naropa, 1994, p. 194). After he has withdrawn his member again, in the words of Naropa, the following happens: “He places his *vajra* [phallus], which is filled with semen in the mouth [of the pupil]’. After that the master gives him his own *mudra*, whom he has already embraced” (Naropa, 1994, p. 194, 195). On the basis of the texts before us we have been unable to determine whether or not the pupil now couples with the girl. This part of the ritual is referred to as the vase initiation and forms the twelfth initiation level.

In the secret initiation (13) which now follows, “the master must lay his own *vajra* [phallus] in the mouth of the pupil’s wife and, whilst the pupil is blindfolded, he [the guru] must suck upon the *Naranasika* of the wisdom consort” (Naropa, 1994, p. 195). Translated from Sanskrit, *naranasika* means ‘clitoris’. “Then,” Naropa continues, “the master must give his own *mudra* to the pupil with the idea that she is his wife” (Naropa, 1994, p. 195). This passage remains a little unclear, since he has already given a *mudra* to the pupil as “wife” during the preceding vase initiation (12).

During the following wisdom initiation (14), the sadhaka, surrounded by the remaining women, unites firstly with the *mudra* which the guru has let him have. But it does not remain just the one. “Since it is a matter of ten *mudras*, the master must offer the pupil as many of them as he is able to sexually possess, and that in two periods of 24 minutes each, beginning from midnight until the sun rises”, Naropa reports (Naropa, 1994, p. 195). He thus has tenfold sexual intercourse in the presence of the master and the remaining women.

In contrast to his guru, the *sadhaka* may under no circumstances express his semen during the ritual; rather he must only bring his drops of *bodhicitta* to the tip of his penis and then draw up the *semen feminine* of one yogini after another (Naropa, 1994, p. 196). Should he not succeed, he is

condemned to hell. There is, however, still a chance for him to escape divine judgment: "If, due to a weakness of the spirit, the *bodhicitta* [semen] is spilled in the vulva, then it is advisable to collect with the tongue that of it which remains outside of the lotus [vagina]" (Naropa, 1994, p. 196).

The fourth, word initiation (15) designates the "supreme state of perfection". In the three prior initiations the sadhaka has drawn off the *gynergy* of his partners and reached a state of bliss. He has now become a *vajra* master himself. This is the result of the inner energy processes in his mystic body, which he has completed during the ritual and which we describe in the next chapter.

What happens now, at the end of this "disciplined" orgy, to the women who participated in the "witches' Sabbath"? The sources are scant. But we nonetheless have access to a translation from the third chapter of the *Kalachakra Tantra* by Albert Grünwedel. This is to be treated with great caution, but taking into account the concreteness of the images the translator can not have made many errors here. Grünwedel tells us that, "At the end of the solemnity a breast-jacket, beneficial to her tender body, is to be given to the blessed earthly formed [i.e., the *karma mudras* mentioned above]. Holy yoginis are to be given another breast-jacket with a skirt" (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, p. 201). And in the following section the tantra recommends giving the girls scented flowers, fruit, and a scarf as mementos of the unique rendezvous (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra III*, p. 202).

The four-stage ritual just described is known as *Ganachakra*. It is the deepest secret of the *Kalachakra Tantras*, but is also known in the other Highest Tantras. Now, at which secret locations are such *Ganachakras* carried out? The famous (fourteenth-century) Tibetan historian, Buston, suggests using "one's own house, a hidden, deserted or also agreeable location, a mountain, a cave, a thicket, the shores of a large lake, a cemetery, a temple of the mother goddess" (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 376). Not recommendable are, in contrast, the home of a Brahman or noble, a royal palace or a monastery garden. The *Hevajra Tantra* is more degenerate and less compromising regarding the choice of location for the *Ganachakra* ritual: "These feasts must be held in cemeteries, in mountain groves or deserted places which are frequented by non-human beings. It must have nine seats which are made of parts of corpses, tiger skins or rags which come from a cemetery. In the middle can be found the master, who represents the god *Hevajra*, and round about the yoginis ... are posted" (Naropa, 1994, p. 46). With the guru in the center these form a magic circle, a living *mandala*.

The number of participating yoginis differs from tantra to tantra. It ranges from eight to sixty-four. Numbers like the latter appear unrealistic. Yet one must bear in mind that in the past *Ganachakras* were also carried out by powerful oriental rulers, who would hardly have had difficulties organizing this considerably quantity of women together in one place. It is, however, highly unlikely that these tantra masters copulated with all 64 yoginis in one night.

Various ritual objects are handed to the women during the ritual of which the majority, if not all, are of an aggressive nature: cleavers, swords, bone trumpets, skulls, skewers. As a cult meal the above-mentioned holy nectars are served: excrement, human flesh, and the meat of various taboo animals. To drink there is menstrual blood, urine, semen, and so forth. The third chapter of the *Kalachakra Tantra* recommends “slime, snot, tears, fat, saliva, filth, feces, urine, marrow, excrement, liver, gall, blood, skin, flesh, sperm, entrails” (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra* III, p. 155).

The sacrificial flesh of the “sevenfold born” which we mention above is, when available, also offered as a sacred food at a *Ganachakra*. In the story which frames a tantric tale, the *Vajradakinigiti*, several dakinis kill a sevenfold-born king’s son in order to make a sacrificial meal of his flesh and blood. Likewise, two scenes from the life of the *Kalachakra* master Tilopa are known in which the consumption of a “sevenfold born” at a dakini feast is mentioned (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, pp. 393-394).

Albert Grünwedel believed that the female partners of the gurus were originally sacrificed at the *Ganachakra* and in fact were burned at the stake like European witches so as to then be resurrected as “dakinis”, as tantric demonesses. His hypothesis is difficult to confirm on the basis of the available historical evidence. Nonetheless, as far as the symbolic significance of the ritual is concerned, we can safely assume that we are here dealing with a sacrificial ceremony. For example, Buston (14th century), in connection with the highest *Kalachakra* initiations and thus also in relation to the *Ganachakra*, speaks of “secret victims” (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 386). The ten *karma mudras* present during the ritual go by the name of “sacrificial goddesses”. One event in the *Ganachakra* proceedings is known as “sacrifice of the assembly”, which can only have meant the sacrifice of the women present (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 386). A further interpreter of the tantras, Abhinavagupta, refers to the *Ganachakra* as the “sacrifice of the wheel” (*chakra* means ‘wheel’) or as the “highest sacrifice” (Naropa, 1994, p. 46).

Everything which we have said about the “tantric female sacrifice” is without doubt also true for the *Ganachakra*. There are documents which prove that such sacrifices were really carried out. In the eleventh century a group of the notorious “robber monks” became prominent, of whom the following can be read in the *Blue Annals*: “The doctrine of the eighteen [robber monks] consisted of a corrupt form of the tantric praxis, they kidnapped women and men and were in the habit of performing human sacrifices during the tantric feasts (*ganachakra - puja*)” (*Blue Annals*, 1995, p. 697). Such excesses were criticized already by the traditional Tibetan historians, albeit with a certain leniency. Thus the Fifth Dalai Lama, who himself wrote a history of Tibet, exonerated the guru of the eighteen robber monks, Prajnagupta by name, of all guilt, whilst he condemned his “pupils” as the guilty party (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 418, note 11).

Obviously, a Buddhist *Ganachakra* is always led by a man. Yet, like much in Tantrism, this ritual also seems to have had a matriarchal origin. The Indologist Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann describes in detail such a gynocentric “circle feast” from the sixth century. It was staged by a powerful oriental queen. In one document it is said of her that, “through her [the queen], the circle king was reduced to the role of a sacrifice which was performed in the circle (*chakra*) of the goddesses” (Mallmann, 1963, p. 172). It thus involved the carrying out of a king sacrifice, found in many ancient matriarchal cultures, in which the old king was replaced by a new one. The sacrificial victim here is at any rate a man. In the *Ganachakra* of Buddhist Tantrism precisely the opposite took place! The yoginis are sacrificed and the guru elevates himself to the triumphant king of the circle.

The gynocentric ritual was also known under the names of “wheel of the goddesses”, “wheel of the mother” or “wheel of the witches”. Its wide distribution in the fifth and sixth centuries, above all in Kashmir, supports our above hypothesis, that there was a powerful reawakening of old matriarchal cults in India during this period.

Contemporary feminism has also rediscovered the matriarchal origins of the *Ganachakra*. Adelheid Herrmann-Pfand is able to refer to several somewhat ambivalent Tibetan textual passages in which in her view *Ganachakras* were formerly directed by women (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, pp. 379, 479). She therefore reaches the conclusion that this ritual is a matter of a “patriarchal usurpation” of a matriarchal cult.

Miranda Shaw on the other hand, can almost be said to revel in the idea of “female witch circles” and takes every *Ganachakra* which is mentioned in the tantras to be a purely female feast. She reverses the proceedings outright: “Tantric literature”, the feminist writes, “records numerous instances wherein yogis gain admittance to an assembly of yoginis. Inclusion in a yogini feast is seen as a high honor for a male practitioner. In the classic scenario, a yogi unexpectedly finds himself in the presence of a convocation of yoginis, perhaps in the depths of a forest, a deserted temple, or a cremation ground. He seeks entry to their assembly circle and feasts with them, receives initiation from them, and obtains magical lore and tantric teachings” (Shaw, 1994, p. 82). Based upon what we have analyzed to date, Shaw’s interpretation cannot be dismissed out of hand. In Buddhist Tantrism women were indeed accorded all power, it is just that at the end of the game the *gynergy* and power of the woman have, through the accomplished use of method (*upaya*), landed in the hands of the male guru.

As always, in this case too the question emerges as to whether the *Ganachakra* is to be understood as real or “just” symbolically. Texts by Sapan (thirteenth century) and Buston (fourteenth century) leave no doubt about its really being conducted. Alexandra David Néel nevertheless concludes that the sacrificial feast in the described form have no longer been

practiced in our century. Symbolic stagings, in which no real women participate and are replaced by substitutes such as vases, are a different matter. According to statements by modern lamas, such ersatz *Ganachakras* were widespread up until the Chinese occupation (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 416).

We would like to briefly discuss whether we are dealing with an orgy in the case of the *Ganachakra*. Archaic people understood an orgy to be indiscriminate sexual mixing within a group. It was precisely the chaotic, ecstatic, and uncontrolled behavior of the participants determined the course of events amid the general promiscuity. Through the orgy ordered time was suspended, there was no hierarchy among the participants. For a few hours the “profane” state of established social order seceded to the “holy” turbulence of chaos. Usually, this occurred so as to invoke the fertility of the earth. It was agricultural and horticultural societies who preferentially fostered the orgy as a high point of their sacred rites. In contrast, the Buddhist *Ganachakra* must be seen as a controlled performance from start to finish. Admittedly it does make use of elements of the orgy (group sexuality and the wild dances of the yoginis), but the tantra master always maintains complete control over events.

Thus, at the end of this presentation of the fifteen initiation stages of the *Kalachakra Tantra* we can establish that all the essential features which we described in the general section on Tantrism reemerge in this “highest” occult teaching of Tibetan Buddhism: the absorption of *gynergy*, the alchemic transmutation of sexual energy, indeed from sexual fluids into androcentric power, the creation of androgyny, the sacrifice of the *mudra* and the *sadhaka*, the destruction of people to the benefit of the gods, and so on. To this extent the *Kalachakra* in essence does not differ from the other tantric systems of teachings. It is simply more comprehensive, magnificent and logically consistent. Additionally, there is its political eschatology, which allowed it to become the state tantra of Lamaism and which we still have to explore.

All the events in the tantric performance which we have described so far have been played out in the external world, in the system of rituals, the sexual magic practices and perceptible reality. The final goal of this visible tantric endeavor is that the yogi absorb all of the energies set free during the ritual (those of the *mudra*, the pupil, and the evoked deities). Only thus can he become the ONE who concentrates within himself the “many”, but above all the masculine and feminine principles, so as to subsequently, in a still to be described second phase, bring it all forth again. From here on he has first reached his perfected form, that of the ADI BUDDHA (the Highest Buddha), who in Tantrism is the ultimate cause of all appearances.

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## Footnotes:

[1] The self-sacrifice (*chod*): in the chod ritual the pupil, in order to attain enlightenment, offers his own body up to be devoured by the dakinis (who, as we know, represent his master). It preferably takes place at burial grounds. The flesh-devourers appear in the dark of night or at full moon and begin to tear the candidate's skin from his body and to tear him apart piece by piece down to the bone. Even then they do not pause, and instead with a dreadful cracking finally consume the bones and marrow. The initiate "dies" in the process and all of his bodily parts are destroyed. With this he achieves complete liberation from all that is earthly and makes the jump into a state of enlightenment. *De facto*, this ritual killing only takes place symbolically — not, however, in the imagination of the pupil — there the scene is experienced with real emotion, as in a dream. This is almost unbearable for people who behave purely passively. On her travels in Tibet, Alexandra David-Neel encountered ghostly figures, shunned by all, who wandered around lost and insane because they had not mentally survived the chod ceremonies. For this reason, the ritual also prescribes that the adept should imagine himself as not just the victim, but likewise as the active party, the sacrificer in the form of a goddess or a dakini. "As soon as your consciousness enters the body of the goddess, imagine that your former body is now a corpse which slumps to the ground. ... You, who are now the goddess, use the curved knife in your right hand to cut off the skull just above the eyebrows" (Hopkins, 1982, p. 162). Afterwards the pupil, as a bloodthirsty *vajra* dakini, consumes his own body laid out before him. Thus, in this ritual he not only surrenders his life, but likewise also plays the sadistic executioner who destroys it. Since the latter is always a female being, he identifies with the imago of the evil goddess. He thereby attempts to overcome the act which he as a Tantric fears most of all, namely to be killed by the feminine, in that he carries it out on himself in the form of a woman.

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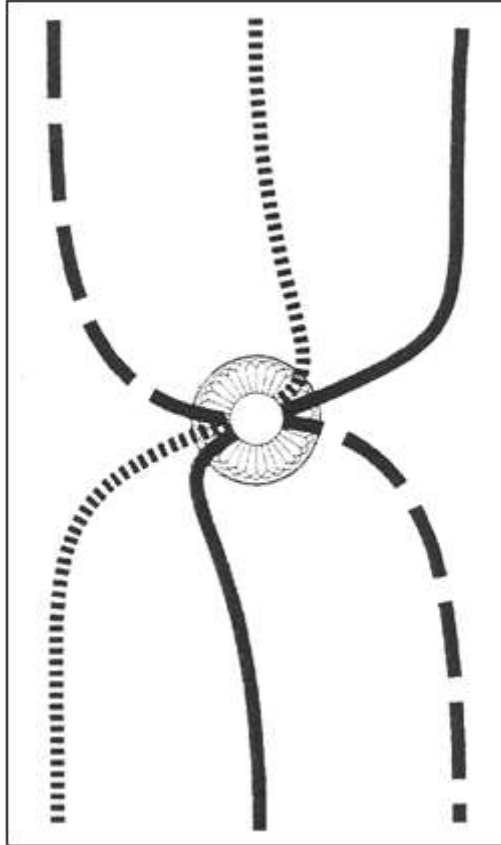
## 7. KALACHAKRA: THE INNER PROCESSES

So far we have only described what takes place in the external world of the rituals. But the perceivable tantric stage has its correspondences in the “inside” of the yogi, that is, in his consciousness and what is called his mystic body. We now wish to examine this “internal theater” more closely. It runs in parallel to the external events.

An anatomically trained person from the twenty-first century requires a godly portion of tolerance to gain a familiarity with the concepts of tantric physiology, then for the tantras the body consists of a network of numerous larger or smaller channels through which the life energies flow. These are also known as “veins” or “rivers” (*nadi, rtsa*). This dynamic body structure is no discovery of *Vajrayana*, rather it was adopted from pre-Buddhist times. For example, we can already find it in the *Upanishads* (ninth century B.C.E.).

Three main channels are considered to be the central axis within the subtle-physical system of a person; these run from the lower spine to the head. They are, like everything in the tantras, assigned a gender. The left channel is called *lalana* (or *ida, kyangma, da-wa*), is masculine, its symbol is the moon and its element water. The right, “feminine” channel with the name *pingala* (or *roma, nyi-ama*) is linked to fire and the sun, since both are also seen as feminine in the Buddhist tantras. We can provisionally describe the central channel (*avadhuti* or *susumna, ooma*, ) as being androgynous. It represents among other things the element of space. All of the life energies are moved through the channels with the help of winds — by which the Tantric means various forms of breathing.

In a simplified depiction (such as is to be found in most commentaries), the left, masculine channel (*lalana*) is filled with white, watery semen, the right-hand, feminine channel (*rasana*) with red, fiery menstrual blood. The main channel in the middle, in contrast, is originally empty. Via sacred, in part extremely painful, techniques the yogi succeeds in pressing the substances from both side channels into the *avadhuti*, the main channel. The mixture (*sukra*) thus created now flows through his entire body as enlightenment energy body and transforms him into an androgynous “diamond being”, who unites within himself the primary energies of the masculine and the feminine.



***The three inner channels (see footnote 1)***

All three channels pass through five energy centers which are to be found in the body of the yogi, which are known as *chakras* (wheels) or “lotus circles”. In Tibetan Buddhism, the count begins with the navel chakra and leads via the heart, throat, and forehead chakras to the highest thousandfold lotus at the crown of the skull. Of great importance for the tantric initiation is the equation of the individual “energy wheels” with the five elements: navel = earth; heart = water; throat = fire; forehead = air (wind); highest lotus (crown of skull) = space (ether). Likewise, the chakras are apportioned to the various senses and sense objects. In addition to this there are numerous further assignments of the lotus centers (*chakra*), as long as these can be divided into groups of five: the five “blisses” similarly count among these, likewise the five meditation Buddhas with their wisdom consorts, and the five directions.

Fine energy channels extend from the “wheels” and, like the physiological nervous system, branch through the entire human body. The tantras describe an impressive total of 72,000 fine channels, which together with the lotus centers and the three main channels form the “subtle” body of the yogi. In an “ordinary mortal” this network is blocked. The energies cannot flow freely, the chakras are “dead”, the “wheels” are motionless, the perception of spiritual phenomena limited. One also speaks of a “knotting”.

Now it is the first task of the yogi to untie these knots in himself or in his pupil, to free and to clean the blocked channels in all directions so as to fill the whole body with divine powers. The untying of the “knots” is achieved in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* through the blocking off of the two side channels (*lalana* and *pingala*), in which the energies divided according to their sexual features normally flow up and down, and the introduction of the masculine and feminine substances into the *avadhuti* (the middle channel) (Dasgupta, 1974, p. 155). In the original *Kalachakra* texts (see footnote) the anatomy of the channels is much more complicated. [1]

The tantric dramaturgy is thus played out between three protagonists within the yogi — the masculine, the feminine, and the androgynous principle. Correspondingly, the three main energy channels reflect the tantric sexual pattern with the *lalana* as the man, the *pingala* as the woman, and the *avadhuti* as the androgyne. The lotus centers (*chakras*) are the individual stage sets in which the plot unfolds around the relationship between this trinity. Thus, if the microcosmic, “inner” world of events of the tantra master is supposed to square with the external, already described ritual actions, then we must rediscover the climaxes of the external performance in his “internal” one: for example, the tantric female sacrifice, the absorption of *gynergy*, the creation of androgyny, the destruction and the resurrection of all body parts, and so forth. Let us thus inspect these “internal” procedures more closely.

### The Candali

The *Kalachakra Tantra* displays many parallels with the Hindu *Kundalini yoga*. Both secret doctrines require that the yogi’s energy body, that is, his mysto-magical channels and chakras, be destroyed through a self-initiated internal fire. The alchemic law of *solve et coagole* (“dissolve and rebuild”) is likewise a maxim here. We also know of such phoenix-from-the-ashes scenarios among the occidental mystics. For our study it is, however, of especial interest that this “inner fire” carries the name of a woman in the Time Tantra. The *candali* — as it is called — refers firstly to a girl from the lowest caste, but the Sanskrit word also etymologically bears the meaning of ‘fierce woman’ (Cozort, 1986, p. 71). The Tibetans translate “*candali*” as ‘the hot one’ (*Tum-mo*) and take this to mean a fiery source of power in the body of a tantra adept.

The *candali* thus reveals itself to be the Buddhist sister of the Hindu fire-snake (*kundalini*), which likewise lies dormant in the lowest chakra of a yogi and leaps up in flames once it is unchained. But in Buddhism the destructive aspect of the inner “fire woman” is far more emphasized than her creative side. It is true that the Hindu *kundalini* is also destructive, but she is also most highly venerated as the creative principle (*shakti*): “She is a world mother, who is eternally pregnant with the world. ... The world woman and *Kundalini* are the macrocosmic and microcosmic aspects of the same greatness: *Shakti*, who god-like weaves and bears all forms” (Zimmer, 1973, p. 146).

With regard to the bodily techniques which are needed to arouse the kundalini, these vary between the cultural traditions. The Buddhist yogi, for example, unleashes the inner fire in the navel and not between the anus and the root of the penis like his Hindu colleagues. The *candali* flares up in his belly and, dancing wildly, ascends the middle energy channel (*avadhuti*). One text describes her as “lightning-fire”, another as the “daughter of death” (Snellgrove, 1959, p. 49). Then, level for level, the “hot one” burns out all the adept’s chakras. The five elements equated with the energy centers are destroyed in blazing heat. Starting from below, firstly the earth is burned up in the region of the navel and transforms itself into water in the heart chakra. Then the water is burnt out and disintegrates in fire in the throat. In the forehead, with the help of the *candali* the air consumes the fire, and at the crown of the skull all the elements vanish into empty space. At the same time the five senses and the five sense objects which correspond to the respective lotus centers are destroyed. Since a meditation Buddha and his partner inhabit each chakra, these also succumb to the flames. The *Kalachakra Tantra* speaks of a “dematerialization of the form aggregate” (Cozort, 1986, p. 130).

Lastly the *candali* devours the entire old energy body of the adept, including the gods who, in the microcosmic scheme of things, inhabit him. We must never forget that the tantric universe consists of an endless chain of analogies and homologies and links between all levels of being. Hence the yogi believes that by staging the destruction of his imperfect human body he simultaneously destroys the imperfect world, and that usually with the best intentions. Thus, Lama Govinda describes with ecstatic enthusiasm the five stages of this fascinating micro-macrocosmic apocalypse: “In the first, the *susumna* (the middle channel) with the flame ascending within it is imagined as a capillary thin as a hair; in the second, with the thickness of a little finger; in the third, with the thickness of an arm; in the fourth, as broad as the whole body: as if the body itself had become the *susumna* (*avadhuti*), a single fiery vessel. In the fifth stage the unfolding scenario reaches its climax: the body ceases to exist for the meditator. The entire world becomes a fiery *susumna*, an endless storm-whipped ocean of fire” (Govinda, 1991, 186).

But what happens to the *candali*, once she has completed her pyrotechnical opus? Does she now participate as an equal partner with the yogi in the creation of a new universe? No — the opposite is true! She disappears from the tantric stage, just like the elements which were destroyed with her help. Once she has vaporized all the lotus centers (chakras) up to the roof of the skull, she melts the *bodhicitta* (male seed) stored there. This, on account of its “watery” character, possesses the power to extinguish the “fire woman”. She is, like the human *karma mudra* on the level of visible reality, dismissed by the yogi.

In the face of this spectacular volcanic eruption in the inner bodily landscape of the tantra master we must ask what the magic means might be which grant him the power to ignite the *candali* and make her serve his purpose. Several tantras nominate sexual greed, which brings her to the boil. The *Hevajra Tantra* speaks of the “fire of passion” (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. xxix). In another text “*kamic* fire” is explicitly mentioned (Avalon, 1975, p. 140). The term refers to the Hindu god *Kama*, who represents sexual pleasure. Correspondingly, direct reference is made to the act of love in a further tantric manual, where it can be read that “during sexual intercourse the Candali vibrates a little and great heat arises” (Hopkins, 1982, p. 177).

The equation of the sexual act with a fire ritual can be traced to the *Vedas*, and was later adopted by Tantric Buddhism. There the woman is referred to as the “sacrificial fire, her lower portion as the sacrificial wood, the genital region as the flame, the penetration as the carbon and the copulation as the spark” (Bhattacharyya, 1982, p. 124). From a Vedic viewpoint the world cannot continue to exist without a fire sacrifice. But we can also read that “the fire offering comes from union with the female messengers [dakinis]” — this from Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Tibetan Yellow Hat school (Shaw, 1994, p. 254).

In his classic, *Yoga and the Geheimlehren Tibets* [Yoga and the Secret Teachings of Tibet], Evans-Wentz described an especially impressive scene concerning the “kindling” of the *candali*. Here the “fire woman” is set aflame through a meditation upon the sun. After the master has required of his pupil that he visualize the three main channels, the chakras, and the “empty form” of a yogini, the exercise should continue as follows: “At this point in the performance you should imagine a sun in the middle of each palm and the sole of each foot. Then see these suns placed opposite one other. Then imagine a sun at the meeting of the three main psychic nerves [the main channels] at the lower end of the reproductive organ. Through the influence upon one another of the suns at your hands and feet, a flame is kindled. This fire ignites the sun beneath the navel. ... The whole body catches fire. Then when breathing out imagine the whole world to be pervaded by the fire in its true nature” (Evans-Wentz, 1937, p. 154). The inner unleashing of the *candali* in the body of the yogi is so unique that it raises many still unanswered questions which we can only consider step by step in the course of the following chapter: Why must it be a woman and not a man who flames up in the belly of the tantra master? Why is the woman, who is linked with the element water in most cultures, equated with fire here? Why is the *candali* so aggressive and destructive, so enraged and wild instead of mild, constructive, and well-balanced? But above all we must ask ourselves why the adept needs to use a real girl in order to ignite the “inner woman” in his own body? Is there perhaps a connection between the external woman and the inner woman, the *karma mudra* and the *candali*?

We shall only address these questions briefly here, pointwise as it were, in order to treat them in more detail in the course of the text. As we have already said, the origin of the *candali* lies in the Hindu *kundalini* snake, of which Heinrich Zimmer says: “The snake embodies the world- and body-developing life force, it is a form of the divine world-effecting force [*shakti*].” (Zimmer, 1973, p. 141). Life, creation, world, power: *kundalini* or *candali* are manifestations of the one and the same energy, and this is seen in both Hinduism and Buddhism as female. Zimmer therefore explicitly refers to the mystic snake as the “world woman” (Zimmer, 1973, p. 146). Corresponding descriptions of the *candali* are likewise known. The Buddhist yogi, whose attitude towards the world of appearances is extremely hostile, makes woman and the act of birth responsible for the terrible burden of life. For him, “world” and “woman” are synonymous. When, in his imagination, he burns up a woman within himself, then he is with this pyromaniacal act of violence symbolically casting the “world woman” upon the pyre. But this world likewise includes his old bodily and sensory aggregates, his psychological moods, and his human structures of awareness. They all become victims of the flames. Only once he has destroyed the existing universe, which suffers under the law of a woman, in an inferno, can he raise himself up to be a divine ruler of the universe.

Thus the assignation of the feminine to the fiery element imputed by Tantrism proves itself upon closer examination to be a symbolic manipulation. Everything indicates that in Indian culture too, woman was and is fundamentally associated with water and the moon rather than with fire and the sun as is claimed in the tantras. In non-tantric Indian cults (Vedic, Vishnuite) the classic assignments of the sexes have completely retained their validity. Hence, the ignition of the “fire woman” concerns an “artificial” experiment which runs contrary to the cultural norms; what the European alchemists referred to as the “production of burning water”. Water — originally feminine — is set on fire by the masculine potency of the flame and then becomes destructive. We shall have to show later that the *candali* is also to be symbolically understood as no more than such an ignited water energy. The water serves in this instance as a type of fuel and “explodes” as the ignited feminine principle in the service of androcentric strategies of destruction. Such a clever idea can only be derived from the tantric law of inversion which teaches us that a thing arises from its opposite. As the *Candamaharosana Tantra* thus says, “Women are the supreme fire of transformation” (Shaw, 1994, p. 39).

If one assumes that the feminine catches fire against its will in the *Kalachakra* ritual, then one can understand why the *candali* reacts so aggressively and destructively. Perhaps, once she has flared up, she instinctively detects that the entire procedure concerns her systematic destruction? Perhaps she also has an inkling of the perfidious intentions of the yogi and like a wild animal begins to destroy the elementary and sensory aggregates of her tormentor in the hope of thus exterminating him and freeing herself? Confronted with her obvious success in the bodily destruction of the patriarchal archenemy, she becomes maddened by power, unaware that she thereby only serves her enemy as a tool. For precisely what the tantric adept wants is to attain a state in which he still exists only as pure consciousness. His first goal is therefore the complete dematerialization of his human body, down to the last atom. For this he needs the fiery rage of the *candali*, who represents nothing other than the hate of a goddess incapacitated by patriarchy.

But it could also be the opposite, that the *candali* falls into the grip of the “consuming fire”, that mystic fire of love which burns women up when they celebrate the “sacred wedding” with their god. Christian nuns often describe the *unio mystica* with Christ, their heavenly husband, with metaphors of fire. In the case of Theresa of Avila, the flames of love are linked with an unequivocally sexual symbolism. The words with which she depicted the divine penetration of her love have become famous: “I saw Him with a long lance of gold, and its tip was as if made of fire, it seemed to me as if he repeatedly thrust it into my heart and it penetrated to my very entrails! .... The pain was so great that I had to groan, and yet the sweetness of this excessive pain was such that I could not wish to be freed of it” (quoted by Bataille, 1974, p. 220). A woman, who completely and totally surrenders herself to her yogi with her whole being, who opens to him the love of her entire heart, she too can burst into flames. Hate and mystic love are both highly explosive substances.

Regardless of what sets the feminine on fire, the pyromaniacal drama which is played out on this inner stage is from start to finish under the control of the yogi as the “master of the fire”. He never

surrenders this position as “director”. Two beings are always sacrificed at the end of the tantric theater: the old energy body of the *vajra* masters and the ignited *candali* herself. She is the tragic inner symbol of the “tantric female sacrifice”, which — as we have explained above — was in the outside world originally executed upon a fire altar.

But here too the already often-repeated warning applies: Woe betide the adept who loses control over the *kundalini* or *candali*. For then she becomes a “terrible vampire, like an electric shock”, the “pure potency of death”, which exterminates him (Evola, 1926, p. 232).

### The “drop theory” as an expression of androgyny

Let us now following the act of destruction examine the inner act of creation in the mystic body of the yogi as it is described in the various tantras, especially the *Kalachakra Tantra*. We have already considered the event where the “fire woman” (*candali*) reaches the inner roof of the yogi’s skull and melts the *bodhicitta* (semen) there. This latter is symbolically linked with water and the moon. Its descent is therefore also known as the “way of the moon”, whilst the ascent of the *candali* goes by the name of the “sun way”. The *bodhicitta* is also called *bindu*, which means ‘point’, ‘nil’, ‘zero’, or ‘drop’. According to the doctrine, all the forces of pure consciousness are collected and condensed into this “drop”, in it the “nuclear energy of the microcosm” is concentrated (Grönbold, *Asiatische Studien*, p. 33).

After the channels and chakras have been cleansed by the fire of the *candali*, the *bodhicitta* can flow down the *avadhuti* (the middle channel) unrestricted. At the same time this extinguishes the fire set by the “fire woman”. Since she is assigned the sun and the “drops of semen” the masculine moon, the lunar forces now destroy the solar ones. But nevertheless at the heart of the matter nothing has been changed through this, since the descent of the “drop”, even though it involves a reversal of the traditional symbolic correspondence, is, as always in the Buddhist tantras, a matter of a victory of the god over the goddess.

Step by step the semen flows down the central channel, pausing briefly in the various lotus centers and producing a feeling of bliss there, until it comes to rest in the tip of the aroused penis. The ecstatic sensations which this progress evokes have been cataloged as “the four joys”. [2]

This descending joy gradually increases and culminates at the end in an indescribable pleasure: “millions upon millions of times more than the normal emission [of semen]” (Naropa, 1994, p. 74). In the *Kalachakra Tantra* the fixation of orgiastic pleasure which can be attributed to the retention of semen is termed the “unspilled joy” or the “highest immovable” (Naropa, 1994, p. 304, 351).

This “happiness in the fixed” is in stark opposition to the “turbulent” and sometimes “wild” sex which the yogi performs for erotic stimulation at the beginning of the ritual with his partner. It is an element of tantric doctrine that the “fixed” controls the “turbulent”. For this reason, no *thangka* can fail to feature a Buddha or Bodhisattva who as a non-involved observer emotionlessly regards the animated *yab-yum* scenes (of sexual union) depicted or impassively lets these pass him by, no matter how turbulent and racy they may be. We also do not know of a single illustration of a sexually aroused couple in the tantric iconography which is not counterbalanced by a third figure who sits in the lotus posture and observes the copulation in total calm. This is usually a small Buddha above the erotic scene. He is, despite his inconspicuousness the actual controlling instance in the sexual magic play — the cold, indifferent, serene, calculating, and mysteriously smiling voyeur of hot loving passions.

The orgiastic ecstasy must at any price be fixed in the mystic body of the adept, he may never squander his masculine force, otherwise the terrible punishments of hell await him. “There exists no greater sin than the loss of pleasure”, we can read in the *Kalachakra* commentary by Naropa (Naropa, 1994, p. 73, verse 135). Pundarika also treats the delicate topic in detail in his commentary upon the Time Tantra: “The sin arises from the destruction of pleasure, ... a dimming then follows and from this the fall of the own *vajra* [phallus], then a state of spiritual confusion and an exclusive and unmediated concern with petty things like eating, drinking and so on” (Naropa, 1994, p. 73). That is, to put it more clearly, if the yogi experiences orgasm and ejaculation in the course of the sexual act then he loses his spiritual powers.

Since the drops of semen symbolize the “moon liquid”, its staged descent through the various energy centers of the yogi is linked to each of the phases of the moon. Beneath the roof of the skull it begins as a “new moon”, and grows in falling from level to level, to then reach its brightest radiance during its sixteenth phase in the penis. In his imagination the yogi fixates it there as a shining “full moon” (Naropa, 1994, p. 72, 306).

Logically, in the second, counterposed sequence the “ascent of the full moon” is staged. For the adept there is no longer a waning moon. Since he has not spilled his seed, the full shining abundance of the nightly satellite remains his. This ascendant triumphal procession of the lunar drop up through the middle channel is logically connected to an even more intensive pleasure than the descent, since “the unspilled joy” starts out in the penis as a “full moon” and no longer loses its full splendor.

During its ascent it pauses in every *chakra* so as to conjure up anew the “highest bliss” there. Through this stepwise ecstatic lingering in the lotus centers the yogi forms his new divine body, which he now refers to as the “body of creation” (Naropa, 1994, p. 311). This is first completed when the “full-moon drop” reaches the lotus in the forehead.

Sometimes, even if not all the time, in wandering through the four pleasure centers the “drop” encounters various goddesses who greet it with “diamond” song. They are young, tender, very beautiful, friendly, and ready to serve. The hissing wildness and the red wrath of the *candali* is no more!” May you,” the beauties call, “the diamond body, the revolving wheel that delights many beings, the revealer of the benefit of the Buddha aim and the supreme-enlightenment aim, love me with passion at the time of passion, if you, the mild lord wish that I live” (Wayman, 1977, p. 300). Such erotic enticements lead in some cases to an imaginary union with one of the goddesses. But even if it doesn’t come to this, the yogi must in any case keep his member in an erect state during the “ascent of the full moon” (Naropa, 1994, p. 75).

In several *Kalachakra* commentaries the ecstatic model of the rise and fall of the white moon-drops within the mystic body of the adept is determined by the triumph of the male *bodhicitta* alone. In the first, falling phase it destroys the fiery *candali* and leads her into emptiness, so to speak, since the *bindu* (drop) also means “nothing”, and has control over the power of dissolution. In the second phase the drop forms the sole cosmic building block with which the new body of the yogi will subsequently be constructed. In this view there is thus now talk of the male seed alone and not of a mixture of the *semen virile* and *semen feminile*. In his *Kalachakra* commentary Naropa writes explicitly that it is the masculine moon which produces the creation and the feminine sun which brings about the dissolution (Naropa, 1994, p. 281). One must thus be under the impression that after the extinguishing of the *candali* there are no further feminine elements existing in the body of the yogi, or, to put it in the words of the popular belief which we have already cited, that perm rather than blood flows in his veins. But there are other models as well.

Daniel Cozort, for example, in his contemporary study of the Highest Yoga Tantra, speaks of two fundamental drops. The one is white, masculine, lunar, and watery, and is located beneath the roof of the skull; the other is red, feminine, solar, and fiery, and located in the region of the genitals (Cozort, 1986, p. 77). The “four joys from above” are evoked when the white drop flows from the forehead via the throat, heart, and navel to the tip of the penis. The “four joys from below” arise in reverse, when the red drop streams upwards from the base of the spine and through the lotus centers. There are a total of 21,600 masculine and the same number of feminine drops stored in the body of the yogi. The adept who gets them to flow thus experiences 21,600 moments of bliss and dissolves 21,600 “components of his physical body”, since the drops effect not just pleasure but also emptiness (Mullin, 1991, p. 184).

The process is first completed when two “columns of drops” have been formed in the energy body of the adept, the one beginning above, the other from below, and both having been built up stepwise. At the end of this migration of drops, “a broad *empty* body, embellished with all the markings and distinguishing features of enlightenment, a body which corresponds to the element of space [is formed]. It is ‘clear and shining’, because it is untouchable and immaterial, emptied of the earthly atomic structure”, as the first Dalai Lama already wrote (Dalai Lama I, 1985, p. 46).

A further version (which also applies to the Time Tantra) introduces us to “four” drops of the size of a sesame seed which may be found at various locations in the energy body and are able to wander from one location to another. [3] Through complicated exercises the yogi brings these four principle drops to a standstill, and by fixating them at certain places in the body creates a mystic body.

The anatomy of the energy body becomes even more complicated in the *Kalachakra* commentary by Lharampa Ngawang Dhargyey when he introduces another “indestructible drop” in the heart of the yogi in addition to the four drop mentioned above. This *androgynous bindu* is composed of the “white seed of the father” in its lower half together with the “red seed of the mother” in the upper. It is the size of a sesame seed and consists of a mixture of “extremely fine energies”. The other lotus centers also have such “bisexual” drops, with mixtures of varying proportions, however. In the navel, for example, the *bindu* contains more red seed than white, in the forehead the reverse is true. One of the meditation exercises consists in dissolving all the drops into the “indestructible heart drop”.

Luckily it is neither our task, nor is it important for our analysis, to bring the various drop theories of tantric physiology into accord with one another. We have nonetheless made an effort to do so, but because of the terminological confusion and hairsplitting in the accessible texts, were left with numerous insoluble contradictions. In general, we can nevertheless say that we are dealing with two basic models.

In the first the divine energy body is constructed solely with the help of the white, masculine *bodhicitta*. The feminine energy in the form of the *candali* assists only with the destruction of the old human body.

In the second model the yogi constructs an androgynous body from both red and white, feminine and masculine *bodhicitta* elements.

The textual passages available to us all presume that the masculine-feminine drops can already be found in the energy system of the adept before the initiation. He is thus regarded from the outset as a bisexual being. But why does he then need an external or even an imagined woman with whom to perform the tantric ritual? Would it in this case not be possible to activate the androgyny (and the corresponding drops) apparently already present in his own body without any female presence? Probably not! A passage in the *Sekkodesha*, which speaks of the man (*khagamukha*) possessing a channel filled with *semen virile* and the woman (*sankhini*) a channel filled with *semen feminine*, leads us to suspect that the yogi first draws the red *bodhicitta* or the red drop off from the *karma mudra* (the real woman), and that his androgyny is therefore the result of this praxis and not a naturally occurring starting point.

This view is also supported by another passage in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, in which the *sankhini* is mentioned as the middle channel in the mystic body of the yogi (Grönbold, 1969, p. 84). Normally, the menstrual blood flows through the *sankhini* and it may be found in the lower right channel of the woman (Naropa, 1994, p. 72). In contrast, in the body of the yogi before the sexual magic initiation no “menstrual channel” whatever exists. Now when this text refers to the *avadhuti* (the middle channel) of the tantra master as *sankhini*, that can only mean that he has “absorbed” the *mudra*’s red seed following union with her.

We must thus assume that before the sexual magic ritual the red *bodhicitta* is either completely absent from the adept’s body or, if present, then only in small quantities. He is forced to steal the red elixir from the woman. The extraction technique described above also lends support to this interpretation.

Regardless of whether the Tibetan Lamas are convinced of the overwhelming superiority of their theories and practices, there is in principle no fundamental difference between Hindu and Buddhist techniques (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 1, 294). Both systems concern the absorption of *gynergy* and the production of a microcosmic/masculine/androgynous/divine body by the yogi. There are, however, numerous differences in the details. But this is also true when one compares the individual Buddhist tantras with one another. The sole teaching contrary to both schools which one could nominate would be total “Shaktism”, “which elevates the goddess above all gods” (von Glasenapp, 1936, p.125).

### Excursus: The mystic female body

But is it at all possible to apply the mystic physiology described in the Buddhist tantras to a woman? Or is the female energy body subject to other laws? Does the *kundalini* also slumber in the perineum of a woman? Does a woman carry her red drop in her forehead? Where can the white *bodhicitta* be found in her and what are its movements? Are the two side channels within her arranged just like those in a man or are they reversed? Why does she also work with fire in her body and not with water?

There are only very few reports about the mystic body of the woman, and even fewer instructions. The books on praxis which we have been able to consult are all drawn from the Chinese cultural sphere. The Frenchwoman, Catherine Despeux, has collected some of these in a historical portrait (*Immortelles de la Chine Ancienne*). A practical handbook by Mantak and Maneewan Chia is available; it is subtitled *The Secret Way to Female Love Energy*.

Generally, these texts allow us to say that the spiritual energy experiences undergone by women within their mystic bodies follow a different course to those for men described above. The two poles between which the “tantric” scenario is played out in the woman are not the genitals and the brain as in the case of a man, but rather the heart and the womb. Whilst for the yogi the highest pleasure is first concentrated in the tip of the penis, from where it is drawn up to the roof

of the skull, the woman experiences pleasure in the womb and then a “mystic orgasm” in the heart, or the energy emerges from the heart, sinks down to the womb and then rises up once more into the heart. “The sudden opening of the heart, *chakra*, causes an ecstatic experience of illumination; the heart of the woman becomes the heart of the universe” (Thompson, 1981, p. 19).

According to Chinese texts, for example, the red seed of the woman arises between her breasts, and from there flows out into the vagina and is, unlike the male seed in *Vajrayana*, not to be sought under the roof of the skull (Despeux, 1990, p. 206). The techniques for manipulation of the energy body which result from this are therefore completely different for men and women in Taoism.

Without further examining the inner processes in the female body, what has been said in just a few sentences already indicates that an undifferentiated transfer of *Vajrayana* techniques to the female energy body must have fateful consequences. It thus amounts to a sort of rape of the feminine bodily pattern by the masculine physique. It is precisely this which the Fourteenth Dalai Lama encourages when he — as in the following quotation — equates the internal processes of a woman with those of a man. “Some people have confirmed that the white element is also present in women, although the red element is stronger in them. Therefore the praxis in the previously described tantric meditation is the same for women; the white element sinks in exactly the same manner and is then drawn back up” (Varela 1997, p. 154).

Should a woman adopt androcentric yoga techniques then her sexual distinctiveness disappears and she is transformed in energy terms into a man. In so doing she thus fulfills the sex change requirement of *Mahayana* Buddhism which is supposed to make it possible for a woman to already in this lifetime be reincarnated as men — at least in regard to their mystic bodies.

Spiritual feminists (and there are a number of these) who believe they can overcome their female impotence by copying the male yoga techniques of Tantrism become caught in the most insidious and cynical trap which the patriarchy was able to set. In the delusion that by unchaining the *candali* within their own body they can shake off the androcentric yoke, they unwittingly employ sexual magic manipulations which effect their own dissolution as gendered beings. They perform the “tantric female sacrifice” upon themselves without knowing, and set fire to the stake at which they themselves are burned as a *candali* or a witch (*dakini*).

### The method or the manipulation of the divine

But let us return again to the male tantra techniques. The “method” which the adept employs to produce his androgynous body is referred to as the “Yoga with Six Limbs” (*Sadanga yoga*). This system of teaching is valid for both the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*. It has been referred to as the highest of all techniques in *Vajrayana* Buddhism. Fundamentally, sexual intercourse with a woman and the retention of semen are necessary in performing this yoga. Of course, if a partner cannot be found, masturbation can also be employed (Grönbold, *Asiatische Studien*, p. 34). [4]

The six stages of *Sadanga yoga* are called (1) Individual retreat (*pratyahara*); (2) Contemplation (*dhyana*); (3) Breath control (*pranayama*); (4) Fixation or retention (*dharana*); (5) Remembering (*anusmrti*); and (6) Unfolding or enlightenment (*samadhi*). We shall briefly present and interpret the six levels.

1. **Pratyahara** (individual retreat): The yogi withdraws from all sensory abilities and sense objects back into himself; he thus completely isolates himself from the external world. It is also said that he locks the doors of the senses and draws the outside winds into himself so as to concentrate them into a drop (Cozort, 1986, p. 124). The meditation begins at night and must be conducted in complete darkness. The American tantra interpreter, Daniel Cozort, recommends the construction of a “light-proof cabin” as an aid. The yogi rolls back his eyes, concentrates on the highest point of his middle energy channel and envisions a small blue drop there. During this exercise the ten photisms (light and fire signs) arise in the following order before his inner eye as forebodings of the highest enlightenment, the infinite clear light. (1) Smoke; (2) a ray of light; (3) glow worms; (4) the light of a lamp — these are the first four phenomena which are also assigned to the four elements and which *Sadanga yoga* describes as “night signs, since one still lives in darkness so to speak, as in a house without windows” (Grönbold, *Asiatische Studien*, p. 36). The remaining six phenomena are called the “day signs”, because one now, “as it were, looks into a cloudless sky” (Grönbold, *Asiatische Studien*, p. 35). They begin with (5) the steadfast light, followed by (6) fire, which is considered to be the shine of emptiness, (7) moonlight and sunshine, (8) the shine of the planet *Rahu*, which is compared to a black jewel. Then, in (9) an atom radiates like a bright bolt of lightning, and lastly (10) the great drop appears, which is perceived as “a shining of the black orb of the moon” (Grönbold, *Asiatische Studien*, p. 35). Grönbold interprets the fact that a “dark light” is seen at the end as an effect of bedazzlement, since the light phenomena are now no longer comprehensible for the yogi (Grönbold, *Asiatische Studien*, p. 35). [5]
2. **Dhyana** (contemplation): On the second level of *Sadanga yoga* the adept through contemplation fixes beneath the roof of the skull his thoughts and the ten day and night signs. This contemplation is characterized by five states of awareness: (1) wisdom; (2) logic; (3) reflection; (4) pleasure; and (5) imperturbable happiness. All five serve to grant insight into the emptiness of being (Grönbold, *Asiatische Studien*, p. 32). When he has stabilized the signs, the yogi has attained the purity necessary to ascend to the next level. He now possesses the “divine eye” (Naropa, 1994, p. 219).
3. **Pranayama** (wind or breath control): Breath, air, and wind are synonymous in every form of yoga. The energies internal to the body which flow through the subtle channels are called winds. A trained adept can control them with his breathing and thus has the ability to reach and to influence all 72,000 channels in his body by inhaling and exhaling. The energy wind generally bears the name *prana*, that is, pure life force. In the *Kalachakra* school the opinion is held that *prana* is the primordial wind from which the nine main winds are derived (Banerjee, 1959, p. 27). Time is also conceived of as a coming and going of breath. Accordingly one who has his breathing under control also has mastery over time. He becomes a superhuman being, that “knows [about] the three times”: about the future by inhaling, about the past by exhaling, and about the eternal present by holding his breath (Grönbold, *Asiatische Studien*, p. 29). The wind, as the yogi’s highest instrument of control, dominates the entire scenario, sometimes

propelling the mystic indestructible drops through the channels, sometimes pushing through the knots in the chakras so that the energies can flow freely, sometimes burning up the yogi's bad karma via breathing exercises. There are numerous catalogs of the various types of wind. Coarse and subtle, secondary and primary, ascending and descending winds all waft through the body. In the *Kalachakra Tantra* a total of ten principle types of breath wind are distinguished. The high point in *pranayama* yoga consists in the bringing of the winds found in the right and left side channels into the central channel (*avadhuti*). In an ordinary person, *prana* pulses in both outer channels, of which one is masculine and the other feminine. Therefore, from a tantric point of view he still lives in a world of opposites. Through the activation of his middle, androgynous channel the yogi now believes he can recreate the original bisexual unity.

4. The fourth exercise is called *dharana* (fixation). The breath wind is fixated or retained firstly within the middle channel, then in the individual chakras. The emotions, thoughts, and visions of particular deities are also fixed through this. Throughout this exercise the yogi's penis must remain constantly erect. He is now the "lord of the winds" and can let the energies wander through his body at will in order to then fix them in particular locations. This also applies to the entry of the breath into the drops, wherever these are to be found. Although the adept now controls the ten main winds, at this stage his body is not yet purified. Therefore he concentrates the energy in the navel chakra and combines it with "the drop of sexual ecstasy". It is this procedure which first results in the ignition of the *candali*.
5. The entrance of the "fire woman" (*candali*) dominates the scenario of the fifth yoga, known as *anusmriti*. Oddly, this has the meaning of 'recollection' (Grönbold, 1969, p. 89). Why is the catching sight of the *candali* "in the body and in the sky" linked to a mystic reminiscence? What is it that the yogi remembers? Probably the "original unity", the union of god and goddess.
6. In the last stages of *Sadanga yoga* the adept reaches *samadhi* (enlightenment or unfolding), the "indestructible bliss". This state is also equated with the "vision of emptiness" (Wayman, 1983, p. 39). All winds, and thus all manifestations of existence as well, are now brought to a standstill — peace reigns among the peaks. For a night and a day the yogi suspends the 21,600 breaths, that is, he no longer needs to breathe. His material bodily aggregates are dissolved. Complete immobility occurs, all sexual passions vanish and are replaced by the "motionless pleasure" (Naropa, 1994, p. 219).

Since the flow of time depicts nothing other than the currents of the energy winds in the body, the adept has, by stilling these, elevated himself beyond the cycle of time and become its absolute master. Back at the third level of the exercises, during *pranayama*, he had already won control over the flow of time, but he only halts it when he attains the state of *samadhi*.

It is astonishing that all six stages of *Sadanga yoga* should be performed during sexual union with a *karma mudra* (a real woman). But until it comes to this, many hours of preparation are needed. The inner photisms described also arise in the course of the sexual act.

For example, to press the masculine and feminine energy currents into the middle channel in *pranayama*, the adept employs drastic *Hatha yoga* practices, which are known as “the joining of the sun and moon breaths” (Evans-Wentz, 1937, p. 33). In translation *ha* means ‘sun’, and *tha* ‘moon’. *Hatha*, the combination of *ha* and *tha*, significantly means ‘violence’ or ‘violent exertion’ and thereby announces the element of violence in the sexual magic act (Eliade, 1985, p. 238). This consists of a sudden, jerking leap up during sexual intercourse accompanied by simultaneous pressure on the perineum with the hand or the heel. That such “methods” (*upaya*) are especially enticing and erotic for a “wisdom consort” (*prajna*) is something we would like to doubt. The lack of feeling, the coldness, the cunning, and the deep misogyny which lies behind these yoga techniques actually ought to hit the *karma mudra* in the eye at once. Yet in the arms of a godlike Lama she would only seldom dare to take her skeptical impressions seriously or even articulate them.

*Sadanga yoga* describes the *Kalachakra Tantra* “method” (*upaya*) to be employed during the higher and highest initiations. We are dealing here with an emotionless, “rational”, purely technical set of instructions for the manipulation of energies which are profoundly emotional, arousing, and instinctive — like love, eroticism, and sexuality. In the classic tantric polarity of “wisdom” (*prajna*) and “method” it is the latter which is covered by these yoga techniques. The yogi does not need to bother about anything else — wisdom, knowledge, or feelings. They are already to be found in the “*prajna*”, the feminine elixir which he can snatch from the woman by properly practicing *Sadanga yoga*. Now what is the result of this calculating and sophisticated sexual magic?

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### Footnotes:

[1] The *Kalachakra Tantra* distinguishes between an upper part to the three main channels and a lower one. Above, the following symbolic division is made: left — moon, masculine; right — sun, feminine; middle — *Rahu*, androgynous. *Rahu* is an imaginary planet which can cause a solar or lunar eclipse. The upper three energy flows thus possess a planetary character. The lower part is determined by the substances which can be found in the three channels before the yoga praxis: left — urine; right — semen; middle — excrement. This arrangement becomes more complicated owing to the fact that the upper and lower channels change their positions. The *lalana* (moon, upper left) appears below in the middle and is there filled with excrement. The *pingala* (sun, upper right) is linked to the lower left, urine-filled channel. *Rahu*, in the middle above, is found to the right below, as the sperm channel. The upper and lower channels also have different names and are filled with different substances in men and women, hence the lower right-hand channel is said to contain menstrual blood rather than semen in the female body (Naropa, 1994, pp. 274, 275). In the women the lower right channel bears the name *sankhini* and is filled with female seed; the lower right channel of the man is known as *khagamukha* and contains the *semen virile* (Naropa, 1994, p. 72). Martin Brauen’s graphical depiction of the channels in the *Kalachakra Tantra* (Brauen, 1992, p. 55) is admittedly logically consistent for a number of reasons — in that he shows the middle channel as continuous from top to bottom, for instance. However, it does not accord with the quoted textual passages from the *Sekkodesha* (Naropa, 1994, p. 72 ff.).

[2] The “first joy” takes effect in the forehead and stretches down to the throat chakra. The second reaches from there to the heart and bears the name “highest joy”, the third ends in the navel and is called the “special joy”. The fourth, the “inborn joy”, realizes itself in the tip of the penis (Cozort, 1986, p. 76).

[3] The first “drop of deep sleep” lies in the heart or at the tip of the penis. The second “drop of the dreaming state”, which is also known as the “drop of speech”, is likewise to be sought in the genital region or in the throat. The third “drop of the waking state” moves between the forehead and the navel. The fourth “drop of erotic ecstasy”, which is experienced during sexual intercourse between man and woman, may be found in the genitals or beneath the roof of the skull. It is also referred to as the “drop of transcendental wisdom” (Dhargyey, 1985, pp. 121,122).

[4] The *Sadanga Yoga* is not identical to the “Six Part Yoga of Naropa” which is far better known in the West. The *Maha Siddha* (Naropa) must nevertheless have known both types of yoga, since he refers to the *Sadanga* exercises in his commentary on the *Kalachakra Tantra*. In the original text of the Time Tantra (*Sekkodesha*) this yoga is only very briefly mentioned, in verses 115-119 of the fourth chapter. However, this brief passage has nothing to say about its fundamental importance, rather just that numerous specific documents exist to which the yogi can easily obtain access. Of these, many of these are in the meantime available in English or German translations. (See above all the works by Grönbold.)

[5] In contrast, alongside the four “night signs” mentioned above, Daniel Cozort mentions the following six “day signs”: (5) destructive fire; (6) the sun; (7) the moon; (8) the planet *Rahu*; (9) a stroke of lightning; and (10) the blue point (Cozort, 1986, p. 125). In the eleventh sign *Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata* reveal themselves in sexual union within the blue drop. The *Sekkodesha* calls this event the “universal, clear shining image” and speaks of an epiphany of the all-knowing Buddha, who shines “like the sun in water, unbesmirched, of every color, with all aspects, recognized as an expression of our own consciousness, without any objectivity” (Naropa, 1994, pp. 229, 254). Other texts specify still more photisms, but in all cases they concern pure fire and light meditations which the yogi has to successfully traverse.

## 8. THE ADI BUDDHA: HIS MYSTIC BODY AND HIS ASTRAL ASPECTS

The highest goal of the *Kalachakra* initiation is the attainment of a spiritual state which is referred to as ADI BUDDHA. In the year 1833, the founder of western Tibetology, the Hungarian Csoma de Körös, quoted for the first time in a European language the famous *Kalachakra* theses which the *Maha Siddha* Tilopa is said to have fixed to the gates of the Buddhist university in Nalanda. In them the ADI BUDDHA is introduced as the highest ONE, from whom everything else emerges: “He, that does not know the chief first Buddha (*Adi-Buddha*), knows not the *circle of time* (*Kalachakra*). He, that does not know the circle of time, knows not the exact enumeration of the divine attributes. He that does not know the exact enumeration of the divine attributes, knows not the supreme intelligence. He, that does not know the supreme intelligence, knows not the tantric principles. He, that does not know the tantric principles, and all such, are wanderers in the orb *transmigratos*, and are out of the way of the supreme triumphator. Therefore *Adi-Buddha* must be taught by every true lama, and every true disciple who aspires to liberation must hear them” (quoted by Körös, 1984, pp. 21, 22). No other tantra has made the idea of the ADI BUDDHA so central to its teaching as the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

It would be false to assume that the ADI BUDDHA is a being who resides in the highest spiritual sphere which the historical Buddha referred to as *nirvana*. This becomes apparent when we examine the three gateways of consciousness which lead to this ultimate realm of enlightenment (*nirvana*): (1) the emptiness (*shunyata*); (2) the signless (*animitta*); and (3) the wish-less (*apranihata*).

*Nirvana*, the *raison d'être* of Buddhism, is because of these three gateways a greatness no longer able to be defined in words. We can only ever talk “about” it, yet never capture it in words or conceptually grasp it. Edward Conze, the eminent historian of Buddhism, has assembled a great number of such formulations with which Buddhist authors have attempted to “picture” the highest spiritual level of their religion. We would like to quote some of these here: *nirvana* is the deathless, immutable, endless, enduring, it is peace, rest, silence, liberation, renunciation, the invisible, refuge, supreme good.

The impersonal “character” of *nirvana* is already apparent from this list. *Nirvana* is thus under no circumstances a person, but rather a state of consciousness. For this reason the bodily depiction of the enlightened Buddha was forbidden in early Buddhist iconography. Following his entry into *nirvana* he could only be portrayed symbolically and never physically — as, for example, a wheel

or a pillar of fire or even through his absence whereby the artist drew an “empty” throne. The “Sublime One” who already dwells in the emptiness could not be portrayed more graphically.

Accordingly, *nirvana* is no creation, not even the prime cause of creation, but rather standstill. It is no action, but rather inaction; no goal-directed thought, rather non-thought. It is without intent and knows no motivation. It does not command, but rather remains silent. It is disinterested and lacks engagement. It stands outside time. It has no gender. It is not even, in the initial historical phase of Buddhism, identical with the mystical “clear light”. All this, however — the creative force, the highest clear light, action, thought, motivation, command — does apply to the ADI BUDDHA.

Unlike *nirvana*, the ADI BUDDHA is not sexually neutral, rather he is the Great Cosmic Androgyne who has integrated the polarity of the sexes within himself. He arose from himself, exists through himself, that is, he has no father or mother. He is birthless and deathless, without beginning and without end. He is the highest bliss and free of all suffering. He is untarnished and flawless. He is the collapse of opposites, the undivided. He is wisdom and method, form and formlessness, compassion and emptiness. He is the quiet and the motion, he is static and dynamic. He has countless names. He is the universal god, the highest lord. In the words of an old Indian hymn dedicated to him,

**He is the ONE and proclaims the teaching of unity;**

**He stands at the summit of being.**

**He permeates everything; he is the infallible way.**

**He is the victor, one whose enemy is defeated,**

**a conqueror, a world ruler who possesses the great powers.**

**He is the leader of the flock, the teacher of the flock,**

**the lord of the flock, the master of the flock, the wielder of power.**

**He has great power, withstands all burdens.**

**He does not need to be led by others; he is the great leader.**

**He is the lord of speech, the master of speech,**

**the eloquent one, the master of the voice, the eternal word.**

(quoted by Grönbold, 1995, p. 53)

We are standing here at an interesting turning point in the history of the Buddhist teaching. Instead of the unnamable, impersonal and sexless emptiness of *nirvana*, we are suddenly confronted by an androgynous universal ruler. A Buddha dwelling in *nirvana* is outside of all time, the ADI BUDDHA in contrast is, according to a statement by the *Maha Siddha* Tilopa, identical with the time god *Kalachakra*. “He is the Wheel of Time, without an equal, imperishable” (Carelli, 1941, p. 21). “The Primordial Buddha [ADI BUDDHA] gives rise to Wheel of Time, the cycle of creation and destruction, unceasing change, that defines our existence”, we are told by Bernbaum (Bernbaum, 1980, p. 127). He is the “king of the *Kalachakra Tantra*”.

He knows the entire secret doctrine of the tantras, controls the body, the language, the awareness and possesses all magic powers. The *Kalachakra Tantra* celebrates him as the lord of illusions, “who emanates many illusory forms. He uses those emanated forms to uproot trees, and also to shake the mountain tops” (quoted by Newman, 1987, p. 296). He is a *dharmaraja*, a king of laws, because he commands all beings as the hierarch. He presides over gods and mortals as the highest universal judge. As the bringer of salvation he vanquishes the foes of Buddhism and leads his followers into the golden age. The ADI BUDDHA stands active at the center of the Buddhist universe, which at the same time emanates from him. Nevertheless he can appear in the anthropomorphic form of a human, a yogi.

If we were to describe the ADI BUDDHA in the terms of philosophical idealism, then we would have to introduce such phrases as “absolute spirit”, “absolute subjectivity”, “absolute ego”. He is the *ego ipsissimus* of the yogi, whom the latter tries to attain through his sexual magic practices. At the end of his initiation, in one tantric text he proudly cries out: At the end of his initiation, in one tantric text he proudly cries out: “I make the universe manifest within myself in the Sky of Consciousness. I, who am the universe, am its creator. [...] The universe dissolves within me. I who am the flame of the great eternal fire of Consciousness.” (quoted by Dyczkowski, 1987, p. 189). Of course, these sentences are not addressed to an individual “ego”, but rather the “superego” of a divine universal being.

Alongside the absolute subjectification of the ADI BUDDHA, whose will is law and whose power is unbounded, there is oddly also the view which would see in this supreme being a great cosmic machine. The universal Buddha has also been imagined to be a clockwork in which every cogwheel is linked to others and all the cogs mesh. The mechanism of Buddhist cosmogony and its controller proceeds in unending repetition, without anything in this chain of events being able to be changed. Everything has its place, its order, its repetition. Even its own destruction — as we shall show — has become an inbuilt event of this mega-machine, just like the inevitable subsequent resurrection of the divine apparatus. A never-ending process, which can never be

stopped, never turned back, never varied. Friedrich Nietzsche must have caught a glimpse of this cosmic clock when he experienced his vision of “eternal repetition”. The ADI BUDDHA is this world clock, the *dieu machine* or divine machine. Absolute will and absolute mechanism, absolute subjectivity and absolute objectivity, the absolute EGO and the OTHER are supposed to find unity in the absolute archetype of the ADI BUDDHA. This paradox is put about by the tantric teachers as a great mystic secret.

Undoubtedly the universal Buddha (ADI BUDDHA) of the *Kalachakra Tantra* exhibits all the characteristics of a universal god, a world ruler (*pantocrat*), a messiah (*savior*) and a creator; he undoubtedly possesses monotheistic traits. [1]

The idea of an omnipotent divine being, many of whose characteristics match the Near East concept of a creator god, was already accepted in *Mahayana* Buddhism and was taken up from there by the early tantras (fourth century C.E.). It first found its maturity and final formulation in the *Kalachakra* teachings (tenth century). Many western researchers are led by the monotheistic traits of the ADI BUDDHA to suspect non-Buddhist, primarily Near Eastern influences here. Convincing references to Iranian sources have been made. The continuing development of the image and its contour are further indebted to a reaction against Islam. In India and the Near East the personally-oriented theophany of Allah presented the common populace with an attractive and emotional counter-model to the elitist and “abstract” *nirvana* doctrine of the learned Buddhist monks. It thus seemed natural to incorporate appropriate charismatic images into one’s own cult. As arch-god, the ADI BUDDHA also represents an alternative to Hindu polytheism, which at that time threatened Buddhism just as strongly as the teachings of the Koran later did.

There had not been such a subjectification of the image of god in the philosophically oriented opinions of the early Buddhist schools up until the great scholar Nagarjuna (second to third century C.E.). They were all at pains to portray the “Buddha” as a level of consciousness, a cognitive field, a stage of enlightenment, as emptiness, in brief as a mental state, yet not as a *Creator Mundi*. In the ADI BUDDHA system, however, the creative aspect plays just as great a role as, for example, the epiphany of divine wrath or the apocalyptic judgment of divine destruction. But the highest mental and transpersonal Buddha consciousness exists on a level beyond creation and destruction, beyond life and death.

The ADI BUDDHA is according to doctrine the “theological” principle, which pervades the entire tantric ritual system. In his perfected form he appears as the “androgynous cosmocrat”, in his incomplete form he is still progressing through the individual initiation levels of the *Kalachakra Tantra* as a practicing yogi. In principle the mystic body of the tantra master coincides with that of the ADI BUDDHA, but complete identity first occurs when the yogi has “exterminated” all elements of his *human* body and transformed it into a *divine* body.

Let us now look at the expansion of power of the ADI BUDDHA as it is described in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Essentially it exhibits five aspects:

1. *An inner aspect*, which can be described via *microcosmic* procedures in the androgynous energy body of the yogi (or of the ADI BUDDHA respectively). There is a “physiological map” of this, depicted with a complicated symbolic character, the so-called *dasakaro vasi* (the ten energy winds). We shall examine this sign more closely.
2. *A temporal/astral aspect*, which stretches to the stars. In his *macrocosmic* dimension the ADI BUDDHA encompasses the whole universe. As far as the heavenly bodies of sun, moon and stars are mentioned, they are treated, in the *Kalachakra Tantra* as in all archaic cultures, as the indicators of time. Anyone who controls them is accordingly the master of time. In this chapter we analyze the various tantric models of time.
3. *A spatial/cosmic aspect*, which likewise extends across all of space. The ADI BUDDHA is, although also a person, likewise identical with the structure of the Buddhist cosmos, or — to put it another way — the *macrocosmic* model of the universe is homologous with the *microcosmic* body of the ADI BUDDHA. Both take the form of a mandala (a cosmic diagram). Here we describe the structure of the universe over which the ADI BUDDHA exerts his power.
4. *A global/political aspect*, which is focused upon the idea of a Buddhist world ruler (*Chakravartin*). As we shall show, the ADI BUDDHA makes an outright claim for real political power over the whole globe.
5. *A mytho-political program*. The *Kalachakra Tantra* does not just treat the topic of the world ruler in general, but has also developed a specific utopia, ideology, and form of state, which are summarized in what is called the *Shambhala myth*. This global political program of the ADI BUDDHA is so significant for an understanding of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and later for the analysis of Tibetan history that we devote a separate section to it.

In the second, political part of our study (“Politics as ritual”) we shall examine all of these five aspects in connection with the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. He is currently the highest *Kalachakra*

master, whose person, actions and thoughts most closely approximate the conception of an ADI BUDDHA.

### The “Power of Ten”: The mystic body of the ADI BUDDHA

The control of cosmic energies through a mystic body described in the *Kalachakra Tantra* is a tradition which was also known in medieval Europe. There were philosophical schools in the West as well which regarded the anatomy of the human mystic body and cosmography as the same science. The person and the universe formed a unity. *Homo omnis creatura* — “man is the entire creation”. In this view, the *microcosmic* organs and limbs — the heart, the navel, the arms, the head, the eyes, for example — all had their *macrocosmic* correspondences.

In order to realize the *microcosmic* conditions for the expansion of power of the ADI BUDDHA, an androgynous body of a yogi is needed, that is, the internalization of the *maha mudra* (inner woman) which we have described above. This obsessive conception, that absolute power can be conjured up through the “mystic marriage” of the masculine and feminine principles within a single person, also had European alchemy in its thrall. We are once again confronted with an event which plays so central a role in both cultures (Western and Eastern) that the equation Tantrism = alchemy ought to be taken most seriously. At the end of the “great work” (*opus magnum*) of the Westerners we likewise encounter that transpersonal and omnipotent super being of whom it is said that it is “at the same time the controlling principle (masculine) and the controlled principle (feminine) and therefore androgynous” (Evola, 1989, p. 48). In the relevant texts it is also referred to as *Hermaphroditus*, to indicate that its masculine part consists of the god *Hermes*, and its feminine part of the goddess of love, *Aphrodite*. This bisexual deity is like the ADI BUDDHA a creative spirit who produces the universe. In the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the late Egyptian collection of mysto-magical texts (200 B.C.E.–200 C.E.) from which European alchemy is derived, we can already read that an “intellectual being, the masculine/feminine god, is the life and light”, which produced the universe (Evola, 1989, pp. 78, 79). Such fundamental correspondences reveal that we are confronted with far more than an astounding parallel between two cultural spheres. There is therefore much to be said for the suggestion that the *Kalachakra Tantra* and European alchemy both stem from a common source.

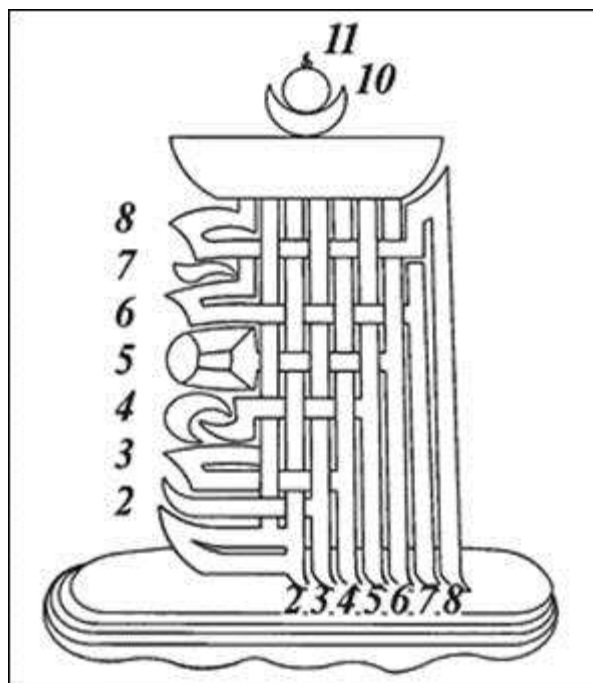
As we have already reported in some detail, the artificial genesis of the cosmic androgyne in both the occidental/alchemic and the tantric/Buddhist experiments is preceded by the sacrifice of the feminine sphere and its subsequent integration into the masculine sphere. Additionally, in both cases the old mental and physical “aggregates” of the adept are destroyed. At the same time as his tantric colleague the alchemist also dies and “lives through” several subtle deaths until he attains his goal. He too dissolves his human existence so as to be born as a deity. He strips away what the texts refer to as his “old Adam” (his human existence) in order to develop himself up into the “new Adam”, the universal superhuman (or god), just as the Tantric must let his earthly personality and ego die so as to then serve as the vessel of a deity.

According to the *micro/macrocosmic* doctrine, the cosmic androgyne — in alchemy as in *Vajrayana* — exercises control over the entire universe with the help of his mysto-magical body. The origin of the universal power lies inside the yogi and then grows out of his “small” body to finally expand to the “great” body of the universe, just as an oak tree grows from an acorn. In this micro/macrocosm theory we must regard the mystic body of the yogi as the central monad of which all other monads (and all other people too) are simply reflections, or, to put it more concretely — and both the alchemists and the Tantrics were so concrete — through the control of his energy body the cosmic androgyne (the ADI BUDDHA or the alchemic *Hermaphroditus*) determines the orbit of the stars, the politics of the world we know, and the psyche of the individual.

### *The dasakaro vasi*

The microcosmic body of the ADI BUDDHA, with which he controls the whole universe, is depicted in the *Kalachakra Tantra* by an enigmatic symbol which goes by the name of the “Power of Ten” (Sanskrit *dasakaro vasi*; Tibetan *namchuwangdan*). The German orientalist, Albert Grünwedel, called it the “Powerful in Ten Forms” and the first Western Tibetologist, Csoma de Körös, the “Ten Protectors of the World”.

We find the character on numerous Lamaist objects. It adorns the covers of books, small boxes and containers for amulets, appears on stupas, and is considered a talisman in everyday life. As the personal seal of the Panchen Lama it is surrounded by the mythic bird, *garuda*, swallowing a snake. The *dasakaro vasi* is said to have been displayed for the first time together with the above-mentioned ADI BUDDHA theses of the *Maha Siddha* and *Kalachakra* specialist, Tilopa, on the gates of the Indian monastic university in Nalanda.



***The dasakaro vasi (Tib. namchuwangdan)***

The sign incorporates seven interwoven letters, of which each is in a different color. Letters one to five depict the five elements in the following order: air, fire, water, earth, space. The sixth letter represents Mount Meru, the cosmic axis of the Buddhist universe; the seventh the lotus, or the twelve continents arranged in a wheel around Mount Meru in Buddhist cosmology, one of which is supposed to be our earth. Above this we find the moon (10), and the sun (11). Both are crowned by the dark demon *Rahu* in the form of a small flame.

This entwined character (*dasakaro vasi*) is the anatomical map of the microcosmic body of the ADI BUDDHA. The individual lines forming the letters are therefore described as his inner venous or nervous system. On a mysto-physical level the *dasakaro vasi* symbol refers to the ten main energy channels from which a total of 72,000 side channels branch off. The starting point for the whole body schema is — as we have described above — formed by the three central veins assigned to the genders, the masculine on the left (*lalana*), the feminine on the right (*rasana*) and the androgynous middle channel (*avadhuti*).

Each of the letters composing the *dasakaro vasi* corresponds to a particular form of energy. The elements — earth, fire, water and space— also count as energies. Each of the energy currents which flow through the veins can be activated by a corresponding magic spell (*mantra*). Put together, the various mantras form a single magic formula, which is said to grant whoever

pronounces it correctly power over the entire universe; the word is “*hamkshahmalavaraya*” (Mullin, 1991, p. 327). This global mantra controls all ten of the main energies which constitute creation and which the tantra master controls through the force of his spirit and his breathing.

This too has its counterpart in European alchemy or in the cabbala closely interwoven with it. The androgynous cabbalist deity in the Jewish system likewise possesses a mystic body composed of *ten* (!) energy centers, the ten *sephirot*, and 32 *canales occultae* (occult channels) coming out of these. The first three *sephirot* correspond to the three main tantric channels of the sexes: *chochma* is the masculine, *bina* the feminine, and *kether* the androgynous one.

There is no doubt that the ADI BUDDHA is identical with the venous system of the *dasakaro vasi*. Yet we must make a differentiation here, for there are numerous indications in the *Kalachakra Tantra* that the “Power of Ten” (*dasakaro vasi*) is exclusively regarded as the symbol of a feminine energy system which the adept renders subservient via the “method” (*upaya*). The term is namely also translated as the “ten *shaktis*” or the “ten powerful goddesses”. (Bryant, 1992, p. 157). Each of them bears a special name. These *shaktis* represent the ten primal forces of the ADI BUDDHA. They are additionally equated with the ten “states of perfection” of the consciousness: magnanimity, morality, patience, effort, concentration, wisdom, method, spiritual goal setting, spiritual power, and transcendent wisdom.

The ADI BUDDHA has — as it says in one *Kalachakra* text — dissolved the *shaktis* within himself (Dalai Lama XIV, 1985, p.406). It must be concluded from this sentence that prior to this inner act of dissolution they must have existed in the external world, either really or subtly. If our suspicion is correct, then these ten *shaktis* of the *dasakaro vasi* are the ten *mudras* who celebrated a *ganachakra* together with the tantra master in the four highest initiations of the Time Tantra. A further passage from the *Kalachakra Tantra* makes reference to this: “At that time there appear the forms of the various empty body *Shaktis*”, it says there, “The yogi, who has arisen in the form of the empty body deity, then sexually unites with these goddesses, giving rise to the extraordinary, supreme, unchanging bliss” (Mullin, 1991, p. 235). Here, his “empty body” absorbs the “form bodies” of the goddesses, so that these continue to exist within his interior as energy currents or as a mystic venous system. In the previous sections we have shown how the real women (*karma mudras*) at a *ganachakra* are transformed via a ritual sacrifice into spirit women (*dakinis*) so as to then continue their existence as the *maha mudra* (“inner woman”) in the body of the yogi. Adelheid Herrmann-Pfand writes that “the dakinis (or ten *shaktis*) are identified with the veins of the mystic yoga physiology, so that the [yogi’s] body [becomes] a horde of dakinis. The process of their union is conceived as a union of these veins or, respectively, of the energies circulating within them which unite into a great current, ascend, and finally pulse through the whole body. ... Through the union with all dakinis one becomes the same as all Buddhas” (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, pp. 400, 401).

In the image of the *dasakaro vasi* then, the ten *shaktis* (the ten *mudras*) flow together into a single powerful female being, the so-called “world woman”. We know her from the *Kalachakra Tantra* under the name of *Vishvamata*, the goddess of time. The various lines of the sign (*dasakaro vasi*) therefore symbolize, strictly speaking, her mystic venous system which is inserted into the empty body of the yogi or ADI BUDDHA at the culmination of the tantric ritual, becomes a part of his self and lies under his control. The male tantra master is thus in possession of a female energy body.

### **Breathing**

We must thus now ask what remains of him as a man? Are the yogi and his male body made female and transformed into the “great goddess”? No! As “empty” as the tantra master may have made himself, he would never relinquish his breathing. His breathing is the absolute control instrument with which he steers the incorporated “world woman” or the “ten *shaktis*”. A yogi who has mastered his breathing is said to ride the energy wind. He possesses a “wind or breath body”. Wind, air, and breath form a unity in tantric terminology and praxis. For this reason, and homologous to the ten *shaktis* or the ten veins of the “world woman”, the *dasakaro vasi* are spoken of in the Time Tantra as the ten “main winds”: “The first eight winds correspond to the eight goddesses (*shakti*) who surround the divine couple, *Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata*, whilst the last two are linked to the center and are associated with the goddess *Vishvamata*” (Brauen, 1992, p. 55).

The final step in controlling the winds is “holding the great breath”. With it, the yogi dissolves the “world woman” in his imagination into emptiness, that is, he exterminates her or brings her to a standstill. But since he can recreate her from nothing at any moment he is “lord over her life and her death”. With her death the world ends, with her *creatio ex nihilo* it arises anew, then the wind energies of the yogi “are endowed with special potencies that are capable of shaping a new world”, as the Tibetan *Kalachakra* interpreter Lodrö Tayé tells us (Tayé, 1995, p. 177).

Once the yogi has incorporated the *dasakaro vasi*, the world woman or the “ten powerful goddesses” he has become the ADI BUDDHA, who now possesses a bisexual “diamond body” (*vajrakaya*). The tantra researcher, Alex Wayman, has described how the *vajrakaya* emerges from the gender dynamics: “The fact that in each instance the goddess is imagined as the initiator, or as the female element behind the scenes, indicates the initiations as the step-wise progress in the solidification of the innate body of the tantras ... meaning the progress of that body to the pregenetic androgyne state and then to the Clear Light” (Wayman, 1977, p. 69). European alchemy also has its *vajrakaya*, the “glory body” which the adept receives in the finale of the *opus* (the great work).

Let us summarize: according to the teachings of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, the mystic body of the ADI BUDDHA consists of ten main energy channels. These correspond on a macrocosmic level to the ten main energies from which all the forces of our universe are derived. To move and lead the individual energies, the ADI BUDDHA makes use of above all his breathing. His energy body is symbolically depicted as the *dasakaro vasi*.

An “etiology” of this sign leads us to the *ganachakra*, or the four last initiations of the Time Tantra. The ten energy winds, which also go by the name of the ten *shaktis*, correspond to the ten *karma mudras* who participate in the sexual magic ritual. The *dasakaro vasi* is therefore a further proof for the fundamental significance of the “tantric female sacrifice” in *Vajrayana* Buddhism, since the *gynergy* of the ten tantric sexual partners is stolen in the *ganachakra* and then integrated into the mystic body of the yogi so that he can obtain the androgynous diamond body of an ADI BUDDHA with it. This body is the powerful instrument through which he controls all the processes of the universe.

### The astral-temporal aspects of the ADI BUDDHA

There is an occult correspondence between the microcosmic body of the ADI BUDDHA and the macrocosmic universe. In the *Kalachakra Tantra* the term ADI BUDDHA encompasses both the energy body of the practicing yogi or *vajra* master and the entire universe with all its worlds and stars. The yogi, the ADI BUDDHA, the tantra master, and the laws of the universe are thus synonymous and form a mystic unity. (We take the liberty of repeating that this doctrine of magic correspondences is absolutely essential to an understanding of tantric logic and that, under the influence of our western/scientific world view, we tend to forget this.)

Already, the story has it, when the historical Buddha was explaining the *Kalachakra Tantra* to King *Suchandra* for the first time, he indicated that the entire universe was to be found within his body. The map of the heavens is similarly inscribed in his body. Sun, moon, and stars are found not just outside, but also within, the mystic body of the yogi (ADI BUDDHA). It was thus that the conception could arise that an enlightened tantra master could move the planets through his internal energy winds. Consequently, the rotation of the stars which we can observe in the firmament is also an action of the winds. “The wheel of stars, fixed at both poles [the pole star], propelled by driving winds, rotates untiringly”, it says in an astronomical fragment from the *Kalachakra Tantra* (quoted by Petri, 1966, p. 58). This driving wind is considered to be “the cosmic breath” of the ADI BUDDHA. Since the motion of the heavenly bodies proclaims the time, the microcosmic “star body” of the tantra master (ADI BUDDHA) is correspondingly a type of time machine, a “cosmic clock”.

Since a universal drama (the fiery ascent of the *candali*) is played out in the energy body of the yogi, there must, according to the doctrine of correspondences, be a matching performance in the macrocosmic heavens. We now wish to examine this spectacle in more detail: the sun and moon play the main roles here, the five planets have bit parts. Two further powerful astral protagonists, unknown to us here in the West, also take to the stage. They are called *Rahu* and *Kalagni*. The zodiac and the fixed stars initially remain in the audience, but become caught up in the general whirlwind of events at the end.

### Sun—feminine · Moon—masculine

The sun and moon correspond in the *Kalachakra Tantra* to the right and left energy channels in the mystic body of the yogi respectively. Here too, just as in tantric astrology, the sun is considered feminine and linked to fire and menstrual blood; the moon in contrast is masculine and corresponds to water and semen. This homology is, as we have already pointed out more than once, very unusual in terms of cultural history, then traditionally the moon is seen as feminine and the sun as masculine.

Perhaps we can grasp this symbolic inconsistency better if we take a look at the astral and elemental associations of fire and water, sun and moon in the Indian cultural sphere. In the Vedic era (1500–1000 B.C.E.) the symbolic linkages were still classical: man = fire and sun; woman = water and moon. The horse symbolism at this stage central to religious life also reflected this “classic” orientation: The stallion represented the sun and the day, the mare the moon and the night. The “sun stallion” symbolized the accumulation of masculine power, the “moon mare” feminine power. The latter was thus equated with the loss of male power in the androcentric society and was considered a symbol for castration anxieties.

In the *Upanishads* (800–600 B.C.E.) fire continued to be regarded as a masculine element. The man thrust his “fire penis” and his “fire semen” into the “watery” cave of the female vagina. (O’Flaherty, 1982, p. 55). Here too the feminine was classified as inferior and harmful. The “way of the sun” led to freedom from rebirth, the “way of the moon” led to unwanted incarnation.

Even in the first century (C.E.), the *Puranas* (a collection of old Indian myths) employed the fiery energy as a name for the *semen virile*. Yet at this time the conception had already emerged that the male seed ought to be assigned to the moon on account of its pale color, while menstrual blood should depict a solar energy. This idea then became codified in Tantrism, of both the Hindu and Buddhist form. For example, we can read in a shivaite text that “the male semen represents the moon, the female flux represents the sun, therefore the Yogi with great care must combine the sun and the moon in his own body” (O’Flaherty, 1982, p. 255).

The symbolic equipment of the Hindu god *Shiva* also provides a vivid example of this 180-degree change in the sexual significance of the sun and moon. *Shiva* wears the moon upon his head as a crown, is mounted upon the animal symbol of the great mother, the bull *Nandi*, and has her midnight blue skin (like the goddess *Kali*). He, the masculine god, is also fitted out with emblems which were regarded as feminine in the preceding cultural epochs. In terms of religious history, the symbolic reinterpretation of sun and moon probably takes effect in his appearance. But why?

We have already indicated on a number of occasions times that androcentric Tantrism must be deeply rooted in matriarchal religious concepts since it accords the universe a feminine character, even if the yogi exercises universal dominance at the end of the tantric ritual. This could be the reason why the male seed is symbolically linked to the moon. An androcentric claim to power over the traditionally feminine is, namely, already expressed in this association, before the whole tantric initiation process is set in motion. The most supreme masculine substance of all, the *semen virile*, reveals itself in feminine guise in order to demonstrate its omnipotence over both genders. *Shiva* wears the moon crown to indicate that he has integrated all the energies of the moon goddess in himself, that is, he has become the commander of the moon (and thereby of the feminine).

Naturally, we must now ask ourselves what happens to the *semen feminine* and the menstrual blood of the goddess. For reasons of symmetry, these symbols are assigned to the sun and to fire. But doesn't the woman through this culturally anomalous distribution now absorb the force and power of the formerly masculine solar principle? Not at all — then in the tantras the “feminine sun” and “feminine fire” have obviously not taken on the many positive characteristics which distinguished the “masculine sun” and “masculine fire” in the preceding cultural epochs in India. In the *Kalachakra Tantra* they are no longer shining, warm, rational, and creative, in contrast they represent deadly heat, pyromania, flaming destructive frenzy, and irrationality on all levels. The yogi does admittedly understand how to deal skillfully with these negative feminine fire energies, he even outright uses them to burn up his coarse body and the universe, but they are not thereby transformed into anything positive. Whilst the tantra master — as we have shown — survives as “pure spirit” the flaming adventure of destruction in which his human body is exterminated, in the end his “inner fire woman” (the autonomous feminine principle) burns herself up and disappears for good from the tantric activities. We must thus distinguish between a *destructive feminine* sun and a *creative masculine* sun, just as we must draw a distinction between the ruinous fire of the *candali* and fire as a significant masculine symbol of the Buddha's power.

### ***The ADI BUDDHA (Kalachakra master) as the androgynous arch-sun***

The association of the image of the Buddha with sun and fire metaphors is, in contrast to his links to moon and water symbols, pervasive and is already attested in early Buddhism. Buddha's father, *Suddhodana*, was descended from a “sun dynasty” and counted as a member of the “sun race”. As a sign of his solar descent his son bore images of the sun upon the soles of his feet, a thousand-rayed wheel or a “hooked cross” (the *swastika* is an ancient sun symbol), for example. A sun-wheel adorns the back of his “spiritual” throne.

In all cultures the lion represents the “sun animal” *par excellence*; this is also true of Buddhism. According to a well-known legend, *Shakyamuni Gautama Buddha* roared like a lion upon leaving his mother's body. From then on he was called the “lion of the house of *Shakya*”. After the young *Gautama* had fled his palace in order to follow the path of enlightenment, he also roared “with the sound of a lion”: “Till I have seen the farther shore of birth and death, I will never enter again the

city ..." (Joseph Campbell, 1973, p. 265). How the gods rejoiced when they heard this powerful "leonine voice". Joseph Campbell, a researcher of myths, comments upon this significant moment in world history in the following words: "The adventure had begun that was to shape the civilization of the larger portion of human race The lion roar, the sound of the solar spirit, the principle of the pure light of the mind, unafraid of its own force, had broken forth in the night of stars. And as the sun, rising, sending forth its rays, scatters both the terrors und the raptures of the night: as the lion roar, sending its warning out across the teeming animal plane, scatters the marvelously beautiful gazelles in fear: so that lion roar of the one who had thus come gave warning of a lion pounce of light to come." (Joseph Campbell, 1962, 265)

Both in *Mahayana* Buddhism which followed and later in Tantrism this solar apotheosis of the Buddha is strictly maintained and even extended. The sun metaphors lie at the center of the *Kalachakra Tantra* too. The time god has a "body like the Sun", it says there (Newman, 1987, pp. 225, 326). *Kalachakra* is particularly often spoken of as the "daymaker sun" (Newman, 1987, p. 243). He is the lord of the "three hundred and sixty solar days" (Newman, 1987, p. 454) and sits upon a "*vajra* lion throne". His believers worship him as "the splendid lion of the Sakyas" (Newman, 1987, p. 243). In a commentary upon the Time Tantra we can read that "*Kalachakra* is in all three worlds as the *sun*, which is the image of time" (Banerjee, 1959, p. 133).

When the universal regal power of the Buddha needs to be illustrated, then the sun symbols step back out into the limelight in Tantrism as well. The images of the moon, which are of such great significance in the mystic body of the yogi, now in the very same texts play second fiddle, or sometimes count as emblems of negativity. Hence the *Kalachakra* researcher Günter Grönbold places the "solar" descent of the historical Buddha in direct contrast to the lunar sphere: "The dynasty of the sun stands, as the reader is aware, for the principle of the unadulterated light. The light of the sun is pure. The light of the moon in contrast has its share of darkness. Moreover, the light of the sun is eternal, whilst the light of the moon, which waxes and wanes in the counterplay with its own darkness, is mortal and immortal at the same time" (Grönbold, 1969, p. 38). That such a sudden "heliolatry" can be only poorly squared with the logic of tantric physiology, in which the masculine principle is represented by the moon and the feminine by the sun, is also apparent to several commentators upon the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Therefore, so that no doubts can arise about the solar superiority of the male time god, these authors have degraded the time goddess, *Vishvamata*, who according the tantric understanding of the body possesses a solar nature, as follows: She "represents not the sun itself, but the sun's effect of daily cycles [hours]" (Mullin, 1991, p. 273). She thus symbolizes a "small feminine sun" which is overshadowed by the "great masculine sun" of the ADI BUDDHA.

Fundamentally it must be said that in the *Kalachakra Tantra* the androgynous ADI BUDDHA unites fire and water, sun and moon within himself — but nevertheless in the final instance he lets himself be glorified as an androcentric arch-sun, so as to demonstrate the masculine light's primacy in comparison to the darkness. The sun symbol is therefore of a far greater radius than the natural sun. It integrates within itself all the light metaphors of the universe. In a description by Herbert Guenther the highest Buddha (ADI BUDDHA) appears "as if the light of the sun were

to fall into an ocean of vermillion; as if the luster of all the suns in the universe were to gather in a single sun; as if a golden altar were rising higher and higher in the sky; ... as it fills the sky with its rays of light as if all the suns in the universe had become a single sun” (quoted by Guenther, 1966, p. 101). The reader should never lose sight of the fact that the ADI BUDDHA, and hence the arch-sun, is identical with the mystic body of the initiated yogi.

### **Rahu—the swallower of sun and moon**

In Greek mythology the union of sun (*Helios*) and moon (*Selene*) is celebrated as a mystic marriage, as the collapse of opposites. We can also find such statements in the *Kalachakra* school, but here the *Hieros Gamos* is a marriage of death, brought about by a terrible existence by the name of *Rahu*, which we now wish to examine in more detail.

In Tibetan astronomy and astrology (which are not distinguished from one another) two further planets with the names of *Rahu* and *Ketu* are to be found alongside the seven wandering stars (the sun, moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn). Seen from an astronomical point of view we are not dealing with real heavenly bodies here, but rather with the ascendant and descendant lunar nodes, that is, the two points at which the moon’s orbit intersects the ecliptic (the path of the sun). These are also known in the occident as the “dragon’s head” and the “dragon’s tail”, or together as the “dragon points”. When, at times which can be determined astronomically, the moon passes through such an orbital node (or syzygy), then an eclipse can occur: when the moon is full a lunar eclipse, and with a new moon a solar eclipse.



***Rahu – the Kalachakra demon of darkness***

Both types of eclipse gave rise to the belief in the minds of the Indian astronomers that a gigantic planet swallowed the relevant heavenly orb. Since the shadow of the moon which obscures the sun during a solar eclipse is always pitch black, one of the imaginary planets, *Rahu* (which consumes the sun), is also black. In lunar eclipses the shadow of the earth appears to have a colored border and the moon becomes copper red, and hence the other planet, *Ketu* (which consumes the moon), is described as being colorful. Nonetheless, in the *Kalachakra Tantra* *Ketu* remains largely in the background and all the events associated with it (the lunar eclipses) are transferred to *Rahu*. Thus *Rahu* appears here as the swallower of the sun and the moon.

Let us now take a closer look at the mythical origin of the dark demon (*Rahu*). In old Indian tales *Rahu* storms across the heavens in a dark chariot drawn by eight black horses as swift as thought itself. He pursues the orbs of sun and moon, snapping at their heels with his huge jaws. In another version of the myth, however, only *Rahu's* head still exists floating above the firmament, having been severed by *Indra*, the sun god, as the dark demon tried to steal the vital drink of the gods. Nonetheless, this decapitation did not hinder him from continuing to fly through the heavens and swallowing the sun and moon. It is just that these now passed through him unharmed and soon reappeared, freed from the lower end of his throat. In astronomical terms this process signifies the end of the solar or lunar eclipse respectively.

*Rahu* plays such a prominent role in the philosophy of the *Kalachakra Tantra* that according to Helmut Hoffmann the events associated with him form a “darkness theology” of their own (Hoffmann, 1964, p. 128). The epithets of the dark demon alone have much to say about his psychology and proclaim his comprehensive mythic program. He is known, among other things, as the “enemy of the moon, subduer of the moon, darkling, flesh-devourer, lion’s son, the roarer, but also [as the] lightgiver of the heavenly paradise” (Petri, 1966, p. 141). He is also called “dragon”, “snake”, “eclipser”, and “lord of the darkness”. In the *Hevajra Tantra* it is still said that it is solely the consciousness of the yogi which brings the sun and moon under *control*. But in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, the *Vajra* master in league with *Rahu* pronounces the *sentence of destruction* over the two heavenly bodies. It becomes the task of the “darkling” (*Rahu*) to destroy the two shining orbs as autonomous forces, that is, to bring the masculine and feminine energies to a standstill.

The destruction of the gender polarity appears — as we have seen — as a necessary stage along the road to power in every tantric ritual. The final goal is first reached by that initiand, “by whom the ways of the sun and the moon are completely destroyed” (Grönbold, 1969, p. 74), as a text from the *Sadhanga Yoga* says, and the famous tantra master Saraha requires that: “Where motility and intentionality are not operative / And where neither sun nor moon appear, / There, you fools, let mind relax restfully” (Guenther, 1976, pp. 69-70). Since the sun and moon both indicate the time, their exterminator *Rahu* is also described as “free from time” (Wayman, 1973, p. 163).

Likewise, in the *Kalachakra Tantra* the middle energy channel within the yogi’s body (*avadhuti*), which draws the right-hand, solar and left-hand, lunar energy currents into itself and thereby shuts them down as independent forces, is equated with *Rahu* which indeed also destroys the sun and moon. The *avadhuti* therefore bears its name and is called “*Rahu*’s channel” (Wayman, 1973, p. 163). In reference to the “lord of the darkness” the middle channel is also known as the “leading channel of the darkness” (Naropa, 1994, p. 272).

Its association with the bodily geography of the yogi also brings the planetary demon into contact with the mystic heat. Accordingly, *Rahu*, the swallower of the shining orbs, blazes as an “androgynous fire” in the Tantric’s body (Wayman, 1983, p. 616). “Hence also when one reaches the androgynous as fire in the middle the sun and the moon will disappear” (Wayman, 1983, p. 616). The relationship of this fire symbolism to the *candali*, who is conceived of as purely feminine and not at all androgynous, remains unresolved. But then the tantras are often not very exact when it comes to the details. Important for us is that in the *Rahu* myth the destruction of the heavenly orbs is executed through fire as well as through darkness. This combination has also earned the imaginary planet *Rahu* the name of “dark sun”. [2]

The power symbol of *Rahu* adorns every Tibetan stupa. In tantric doctrine it is this small, unprepossessing flame which has elevated itself above the sun and the moon so as to demonstrate that both shining orbs are under its control. The androgynous violence of the “black sun” could hardly be demonstrated more vividly or concisely.

### Kalagni and the doomsday mare

The demon *Rahu* also occupies a central place in the iconography of the *Kalachakra* couple. The four cushions upon which the time god dances with his partner (*Vishvamata*) contain in concentrated form the entire program of this tantra. The two upper cushions depict the sun and moon respectively and must be seen as the emblems of the two time deities (*Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata*). Beneath them lie the cushions of *Kalagni* and *Rahu*, the two demons of death which shall exterminate the mystic couple. We have already made *Rahu*’s acquaintance, but who is *Kalagni*?

*Kalagni* is considered the “apocalyptic fire” which destroys the world. On a microcosmic level *Kalagni* is equated with the “inner fire woman” of the yogi, the *candali*. On a macrocosmic scale this fire demoness (we have several still to be presented reasons for regarding it as a feminine force) destroys the entire universe. She liquidates the sexes as the two universal primal forces of being and therefore like the planet *Rahu* has the epithet of “devourer of the sun and moon”. But primarily she is known as the “fire of destruction”. The Sanskrit word *kalagni* is, namely, etymologically composed of *kala* (‘time’/‘destruction’) and *agni* (‘fire’). But *kala* also means ‘black’ and reminds us of *Kali*, the wrathful black goddess, ruler of the dark last days, the *Kali yuga*. *Kalagni*, *Kali* and *Candali* are accordingly variants of the terrible mother who plunges the universe and herself into a sea of flames, so that the tantra master as the ADI BUDDHA can then bring it forth from himself in an autonomous act of creation.

We can thus see that *Kalagni* performs similar functions to *Rahu*, so that we can quite reasonably regard both planets as the two aspects of the same energy (the one masculine, the other feminine). The German explorer of *Kalachakra* astronomy, Winfried Petri, refers to them on the basis of their limitless destructive power “as the highest instances of cosmic activity” (Petri, 1966, p. 146). They are at any rate the two protagonists of the Time Tantra who systematically bring about the downfall of the heavens, then *Rahu*’s and *Kalagni*’s destructive role is not limited to the destruction of the sun and moon. Just as the yogi burns up the various aggregate states of his body from the bottom to the top using the inner fire (*candali*), so too do *Rahu* and *Kalagni* destroy all the planets of the heavens (Saturn, Jupiter, etc.) in parallel, then the energy centers (*chakras*) in the mystic body of the tantra masters correspond to the various planetary spheres. Just as all the *chakras* are *microcosmically* burnt out by the “inner heat”, so to a corresponding planetary

holocaust takes place in the *macrocosmic* world. *Candali* and *Kalagni* are thus aspects of the same feminine destructive force.

In the *Kalachakra Tantra*, *Kalagni* also has the epithet of “the mare's mouth fire” (Newman, 1987, pp. 229, 481). Based upon a study by the American Indologist, Doniger O’Flaherty, we would like to devote a few considerations to this peculiar phrase. The myth of the so-called “*doomsday mare*” has a long tradition in India. The customary tales tell of how she is held captive at the deepest point of the ocean and how flames stream continuously from her nostrils. At the end of time the monstrous horse escapes its watery prison and sets the whole universe on fire. “The fire of the mare's mouth drinks the waters of the ocean and lets them out again; eventually this fire of the underworld will destroy the universe, at the end of the Kali age”, we are told in the Indian national epic, the *Mahabharata* (O’Flaherty, 1982, p. 213).

In general, in Indian mythology the “mare” has characteristics similar to those we know from descriptions of the *candali*. It is a symbol for a “lower-class woman”, for the insatiable sexual appetite of men-destroying witches, for all erotic excesses of the female sex. “The minute she sees a man,” we read in one text, “a woman's vulva becomes wet immediately. ... Death, hell, the mare-headed [fire], a razor's edge, poison, a serpent, and fire — women are all of these in one” (O’Flaherty, 1982, p.214). Women from the retinue of the Indian goddess *Kali*, who are considered as seductive and highly sexual, are still today feared as emanations of the dangerous *doomsday mare*. [3]

Deep down, the demonic mare, inflamed with rage, is the arch-enemy of the tantra master, who can only bring her under control through the reining in of all his passions. O’Flaherty sees in her the outright cosmic *gynocentric* opponent to the *androgynous* cosmocrat, the bisexual yogi: “For the mare is the quintessential female androgyne, the phallic woman. ... female androgynes are comparatively rare but, when they occur they are more deadly than the males” (O’Flaherty, 1982, p. 236) But we ought never forget that the tantra master has mastered the magic art with which to put the deadly energy of the woman to use in his own pursuit of power. Let us also not forget that at the end of the eschatological fire occasioned by the doomsday mare (*Kalagni/Candali/Kali*), it is not she, but rather the yogi as ADI BUDDHA who ascends the world throne.

It is particularly striking that in the myth of the mare the apocalyptic fire comes out of the water. (The fiery mare is to be found in the depths of the world's oceans.) If we interpret the story from the viewpoint of the tantric initiation this origin may become more comprehensible. This concerns, namely, a phenomenon which is known as “burning water” in European alchemy. Water, originally feminine, is ignited by the masculine energy of fire and then functions destructively. In the old Indian legal codex of *Manu* we can also read that, “Fire is born of water, as is seen in the case of lightning and the mare fire” (O’Flaherty, 1982/1988?, p.214).

Once ignited water behaves like some sort of cosmic fuel and serves the masculine as a destructive energy. On the macrocosmic level the yogi makes use of the “submarine fire” of the mare to dissolve the old universe with its help, just as he destroys his old bodily aggregates on the microcosmic level with the help of the *candali*. Thereby, the “death” of the ocean and of the feminine with it is preprogrammed, since when the doomsday mare has burnt up all of the seas it ultimately destroys itself, just as in parallel the *candali* collapses and quits the tantric stage once the tantric combustion procedure is concluded.

The *doomsday mare* and the apocalyptic fire, *Kalagni*, represent the same destructive energy, it is just that one is to be found in the depths of the sea, the other in contrast at the roots of the of the world mountain Meru, there where the fires of hell burn. When the time has come, *Kalagni* rises up out of the lower layers and step by step burns down the world, the planets, and the stars. Just as the yogi is weighed down with past karmic debts which he must cleanse with a baptism of fire along his way to enlightenment, so too, according to the *Kalachakra* doctrine, the debt of many millennia weighs upon the stars and planets. Therefore the heavenly bodies must also undergo a total purification by fire. The same is true for the twelve months and the zodiacal signs which correspond to them. They are likewise blemished with a special *nidama*, a type of karmic stain: the star sign Capricorn with ignorance, for example, Leo with desire, Scorpio with rebirth, and so forth (Banerjee, 1959, p. 166).

Inexorably and cruelly, *Kalagni* lets the whole universe go up in flames. Along with the stars the inhabitants of heaven are also burnt out, the Buddhas and the gods; with the earth humanity and all other living creatures are also consumed by fire. The elements dissolve themselves — space, air, fire, water, and earth. The entire creation sinks into a sea of fire. In the *macrocosm* only a few “galactic seeds” remain, which form the starting material for a new world (Tayé, 1995, p. 41). The sole element which survives this apocalypse is wind, that is, in *microcosmic* terms, the breath of the tantra masters (ADI BUDDHA). In the next cosmic epoch it has an effect on the remaining “galactic seeds” and creates a new universe from them. [4]

### The myth of eternal recurrence

The myth of the world fire, which dominates the *Kalachakra Tantra*, was originally at home in the Greek and Oriental cultures. The majority of orientalist assume that it came from Iran. From there it penetrated the Indian cultural sphere and became linked to, among other things, Buddhist systems of yoga. Hence we also find the traditional motif of the apocalyptic fire doctrine in the Time Tantra, namely the destructive triumph of Good over Evil: In an epoch of decadence Evil has seized power. Therefore the great fire which consumes the corrupted universe acts as the final catharsis. The apocalyptic logic to be found in many religions which infers that the new can only be born out of the catastrophic destruction of the old, is thus also a paradigm in the

*Kalachakra* teachings and has , as we shall later show through examples from Tibetan history, had disastrous consequences — incidentally no less than the Apocalypse of St. John has had for the West.

Time and time again *Rahu* will swallow the sun and the moon, time and again *Kalagni* will drown the universe in a sea of flames, time and again the world will end and time and again it will arise anew. Such concepts of “eternal recurrence” repeatedly display the same apocalyptic schema: a state of paradise at the start, then accelerating decline of morals and the conditions of life, a destructive global catastrophe at the end and a glorious new beginning which recreates the original paradise.

In the Indian beliefs about world time (which were taken up by Buddhism) just as in the Greco-Roman world a distinction is drawn between four great cycles. In the West these are known as the golden, silver, copper, and iron ages. The first of these corresponds in the Indian system to the *Kṛta yuga* the last to the *Kali yuga*. All four eras form a *Mahakalpa*, a great cycle, at the end of which stands the sacrifice of the whole universe and at whose new beginning a redemptive figure stands. (We shall consider in detail this messianic figure who emerges at the interface between the destruction and the renewal of the world and who also makes a spectacular appearance in the *Kalachakra Tantra* in our discussion of the *Shambhala myth*.) [5]

In eternal recurrence the universe runs through this rhythm of destruction and resurrection. Billions upon billions of universes suffer the same fate. Something like this exceeds human comprehension, but the truly monstrous in this conception is that the tantra master, for whom there is an occult correspondence between the inner world and the outside world, is supposed to be the director of this cosmic drama, in that he purposefully frees the *candali* (the fire woman) within his mystic body. He appears in the *Kalachakra Tantra* both as the great destroyer, the *Rudra Chakrin*, the wrathful “wheel turner”, who moves the wheel of cyclical time, and also in the form of the long awaited messiah who leads the chosen out of the terrible hell of the *Kali yuga* (to which he administers the death-blow) into the sunlight of the *Kṛta yuga*. He is the ADI BUDDHA, the lord of the astral worlds and of the times. [6] The famous scholar of religious studies, Mircea Eliade, speculates over a number of pages in a text on the *Mythos der ewigen Wiederkehr* [Myth of eternal recurrence] as to how the people of antiquity found comfort in the idea that one day the time of their misery and torment would pass and be replaced by a joyful time (Eliade, 1953). As bad as it may be for us, the hour will come in which we enter the original paradise once more. The resurrection inevitably follows the catastrophe. But — and this is something Eliade suppresses — in this model, the catastrophe inevitably follows the resurrection. (He also suppresses the fact that in most religions those of different faiths are sacrificed in the apocalyptic downfall and only the true believers are allowed to enter the Christian “New Jerusalem” or the Buddhist mythic realm, “Shambhala”.)

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## Footnotes:

[1] This doesn't mean that he must therefore renounce the nameless "characteristics" of *nirvana* in the tantric texts. Indeed, Tantrism sees itself as the continuation and further development of the two previous schools of *Hinayana* and *Mahayana* Buddhism and is constantly at pains to integrate their teachings. In its view they can be all but said to form the necessary steps which must be climbed before the diamond path may be set foot upon. It is, however, not rare for *Vajrayana* to become caught up in incurable contradictions in this undertaking. One of these is the personification of the ADI BUDDHA as a creator god.

[2] We also know of a "dark" or "black sun" in the symbolic world of European alchemy, which — exactly like *Rahu* in the *Kalachakra Tantra* — has the role of destroying the sun and moon as the masculine and feminine principles and replacing them with an androgynous principle.

[3] The "mare" as the symbol of dangerous, aggressive and morbid femininity must therefore be seen in stark contrast to the "cow", highly revered in India. In the two animals prostitution (mare) and marriage (cow), dissolution and fidelity, lecherousness and motherhood, sex and love, destruction and fertility confront one another.

[4] The cynicism and the consequences of such or similar statements as — "The microcosmic apocalypse experienced by the yogi is only from one side a downfall: It is opposed by a becoming in the spiritual [side]" — is something the authors are barely aware of, simply because they do not take the micro/macrocosmic consequences seriously (Hinze, 1983, p. 48). Everything which is within, so Tantrism teaches us, is also outside. This means without exception that the yogi through the ritual destruction of the internal (his bodily aggregates) also destroys the external. Or, to put about the above quotation, the "becoming in the spiritual" is linked to an extermination of the material (the external world).

[5] Normally the sequence of yugas is conceived as a series in time. This is also true in general for the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Yet here a further, very original conception is adopted from Indian mythology, which says that all four ages exist simultaneously alongside one another, as the segments of a circle, so to speak. The time god wanders through this circle as the savior, pacing the periphery. The territory which he is walking through always finds itself in the last phase of the *Kali yuga*. But as soon as the "messiah" has set foot in it, the golden era (*Krta Yuga*) dawns at this location. The time god thus finds himself constantly on the borderline between catastrophe and paradise. He is the clock hand which in every second transforms hell into heaven and, since he is walking in circles, this situation repeats itself incessantly (Petri, 1966., p. 39).

[6] In the *Four Noble Truths*, all schools of Buddhism teach the origin of suffering, the way to alleviate the suffering, and the entry into timelessness (*nirvana*). It is difficult too understand why the doctrine — already in *Mahayana* and later in *Vajrayana* — adopted as its own a cyclic vision of world history, which predicates suffering as a constantly to be repeated cosmic program.

## 9. THE ADI BUDDHA: THE MANDALA PRINCIPLE AND THE WORLD RULER

We have described how the “starry body” of the tantra master (ADI BUDDHA) indexes the time, but his mystic body likewise embraces all of space and everything we have said about the heavenly bodies is basically also true for the spatial arrangement of the universe. The ADI BUDDHA incorporates the entire Buddhist cosmos. This is to be understood most concretely in a tantric point of view, and means that the structural elements of the “great world” must be able to be found again as structural elements in the body (the “small world”) of the yogi (ADI BUDDHA). We thus begin with a look at the construction of the Buddhist cosmos.

### The Buddhist mandala cosmos

As soon as we have gained some insight into the cosmography of Buddhism it becomes apparent how fundamentally different it is from our modern scientific world view. It is primarily based upon the descriptions of the *Abhidharmakosa*, a written record from the *Mahayana* scholar Vasubhandu (fifth century C.E.). The *Kalachakra Tantra* has largely adopted Vasubhandu’s design and only deviates from it at particular points.

At the midpoint of the Buddhist universe rises Meru, the world mountain, which towers above everything else and on which heaven and earth meet. It is round like the “axle of a wheel”. In a passage in the *Kalachakra Tantra* it is compared to the *vajra* and described as a gigantic “thunderbolt” (Newman, 1987, p. 503). The Swiss mandala expert, Martin Brauen, sees in it a “dagger-like shape” and therefore calls it the “earth dagger” (Brauen, 1992, p. 127). According to Winfried Petri the world mountain has the form of the “inverted base of a cone”. All of these are phallic metaphors.

Five circles of different sizes surround the gigantic “phallus” like wheels; they are each assigned to an element. Starting from the outermost they are the circle of space, the circle of air, the circle of fire, the circle of water, the circle of earth. Air and fire, however, permeate the entire cosmic architecture. “In all directions are wind [air] and fire”, the *Kalachakra Tantra* says (Newman, 1987, p. 506). These two elements are the spirit, so to speak, which blows through the entire construction, but they also form the two forces of destruction which shall obliterate the world structure at the end of time, exactly as the breath (air, wind) and the flames (fire, *candali*) together burn down the old bodily aggregates in the yogi’s mystic body. The circle of the earth consists of a total of twelve individual continents which swim on the circle of water like lotus blossoms. It thus forms a discontinuous, non-homogenous circular segment. One of these continents is our world, the “earth”. It bears the name *Jambudvipa*, which means “rose apple tree continent”.

In *Vasubandhu's* original account, Meru is not surrounded by the five elements, but rather by seven ring-like chains of mountains, which lie like wheels around the world axis. Huge oceans are found between these wheels. The last of these seas is also the largest. It is called *Mahasa Mudra*, the Great *Mudra*.

Thus, in the Buddhist concept of the world Meru forms the vertical, which is divided into three segments — from bottom to top: (1) hell, (2) earth, and (3) heaven.

At its roots, (1), the seven main hells are found, each more horrific than the last. In contrast to Western beliefs about the under world, in Buddhism there are “cold hells” in addition to the hot, where souls are tormented not with fire but with ice. Watery hells can also be found there, in others only smoke. The precise description of the torments in these dreadful places has been a favorite pastime of Tibetan monks for centuries. Above the underworld, at the foot of Meru, live the so-called hunger spirits (*pretas*), a restless horde of humanoid beings, who are driven by constant desire.

In the middle segment of the mountain, (2), we encounter the twelve continents, and among them *Jambudvīpa*, the earth. Since the continents are surrounded by ocean, there is no natural land bridge to the world axis. We humans live on the “rose apple tree continent” (*Jambudvīpa*). This continent is also called the “land of karma”, since the beings who live there are still burdened with *karma* (stains as a consequence of bad deeds). But we inhabitants of *Jambudvīpa* have the chance to work off such karmic stains for good, by following the teachings of the Buddha. This is a great privilege which is not as readily available to the inhabitants of other spheres or the other continents.

Above the earthly world rises the segment of the heavens, (3), and here we find ourselves in the realm of the stars and planets. Beyond this one can wander through various divine circles, which become ever more powerful the higher one goes. The “divine” ascent begins in regions inhabited by deities who have not yet freed themselves from their desires. Then we enter the victorious residences of the thirty-three deities of the “realm of forms”, which we can regard as “Forms” in the platonic sense, that is, as immobile, downward radiating energy fields. Among them are to be included, just as with Plato, the higher entities which represent the pure essence of the five elements.

We now leave behind Mount Meru as a geographically describable region and “fly” through a “zone of intersection”, in which the realm of the form gods and the even more powerful, more grandiose, and more holy imperium of formlessness can be found. The “inhabitants” of this sphere are no longer personalities at all and cannot be visualized, rather, they bear the names of general terms. The *Abhidharmakosa* calls them “Without sorrow”, “Nothing greater”, “Great success”, “Stainless”, and so forth. Even higher up we encounter a sphere, which has names such as “Infinite

consciousness “ and “ Nothing whatever” (Tayé, 1995, p.155). The *Kalachakra Tantra* has completely incorporated this model of the world from Mahayana Buddhism.

From this staged symbolism of the world mountain we can easily recognize that it embodies not just a cosmic model, but also, homologously, the likeness of an initiatory way. Now whether this way begins down in hell or from the middle of the continent of earth, it should in any case lead, via a progression through various earthly and heavenly spheres, to the highest regions of the formless realm.

### *The cosmos and the energy body of the yogi*

As we have already indicated a number of times, a homology exists between the Buddhist cosmogram and the bodily geography of the yogi. Microcosm and macrocosm are congruent, the world and the mystic body of a practicing yogi form a unity. The ADI BUDDHA, as the perfected form of the highest tantra master, and the cosmos are identical.

"Everything is in the body" — this famous occult correspondence is of fundamental significance for Tantrism too. The parallel to the world axis (*Meru*) is formed, for example, by the middle channel (*avadhuti*) in the mystic body of the yogi. The texts then also refer to it simply and straightforwardly as “Meru”. Just as the realm of formlessness is to be sought above Mount Meru in the cosmos, so the yogi (ADI BUDDHA) experiences the highest bliss of the “emptiness of all forms” above his head in the “thousand-petaled lotus”. The forehead chakra and the throat chakra correspond to the residences of various of the thirty-three form gods (Forms) mentioned above. Humanity lives in the heart of the yogi and below this it goes on to the genitals, where the realms of hell are situated.

Correspondingly, it says in the *Kalachakra Tantra*: “Earth, wind, gods, seas, everything is to be recognized amidst the body” (Grünwedel, *Kalacakra II*, p. 2). All the parts of the “small” body correspond to the parts of the “great” body: The yogi’s (ADI BUDDHA’s) rows of teeth form the various lunar houses; the veins the rivers. Hands and feet are islands and mountains, even a female louse hidden in the pubic hair of a Tantric has a “transcendent” significance: It counts as the dangerous vulva of a demoness from a particular region in hell (Grünwedel, *Kalacakra II*, p. 34). This bodily homology of the cosmos is the great secret which Buddha revealed to King *Suchandra* as he instructed him in the *Kalachakra Tantra*: “As it is without, so it is in the body.” (Newman, 1987, pp. 115, 104, 472, 473, 504, 509). At the same time as the secret was exposed, the “simple” recipe with which the yogi could attain and exercise absolute control over the whole universe was also revealed: in that he controls the energy currents within his mystic body he controls the cosmos; on the scale in which he lets bliss flow through his veins (wind channels), on that scale he brings delight to the universe; the turbulence which he calls forth in his insides also shakes the external world through storms and earthquakes. Everything happens in parallel: when the yogi burns up his body during the purification the very same procedure reduces the whole universe to rubble and ash.

### *Chakravala or the iron wheel*

Just as the androgynous body of the ADI BUDDHA or of the enlightened yogi concentrates within itself the energies of both sexes, so Buddhist cosmography is also based upon a gender polarity. Meru, the world mountain, has a most obviously phallic character and is therefore also referred to as *Vajra* or, more directly, as *Lingam* (phallus). The great oceans which surround the masculine symbol represent — as a circle and as water — the feminine principle.

Oddly, the outermost chain of mountains within the cosmic model are forged from pure iron. This iron crown must have a deep symbolic significance since the whole system is named after it; its name is *Chakravala* ("iron wheel"). We thus have to ask ourselves why the Buddhist universe is framed by a metal which is seen all over the world as a symbol of injury, killing, and war. The image naturally invites a comparison to the "iron age" to which in Greco-Roman mythology humanity is chained before its cyclical downfall. The Indian idea of the *Kali yuga* and the European one of the "iron age" are congruent in a surprising number of aspects. In both cases it comes to an increasingly rapid degeneration of the law, customs, and morality. In the end only a war of all against all remains. Then a savior figure appears and the whole cosmic game begins afresh.

### *Modern and Buddhist world views*

The reader may have already asked him or herself how contemporary Tibetan lamas reconcile their traditional Buddhist cosmology with our scientific world view. Do they reject it outright, have they adopted it, or do they seek for a way to combine both systems? Someone who knew the *Kalachakra Tantra* well, the Kagyupa guru, Kalu Rinpoche, who died in 1989, gave a clear and concise answer to all three questions: "Each of these cosmologies is perfect for the being whose karmic projections cause them to experience their universe in this manner. ... Therefore on a relative level every cosmology is valid. At a final level, no cosmology is absolutely true. It cannot be universally valid as long as there are beings in fundamentally different situations" (Brauen, 1992, p. 109). According to his, the cosmos is an apparition of the spirit. The world has no existence outside of the consciousness which perceives it. If this consciousness changes then the world changes to the same degree. For this reason the cosmography of Buddhism does not describe *nature* but solely *forms of the spirit*. Such an extreme idealism and radical relativism helps itself to the power to undermine with a single dry statement the foundations of our scientific world view. But if nothing is final any more, it follows that everything is possible, even the cosmology of the *Abhidharmakosa*. Yet, the lamas argue, only at the point in time where all of humanity have adopted the Buddhist paradigm can they also perceive the gigantic Meru mountain in the middle of *their* universe. Today, Tibetan gurus claim, only the few "chosen" have this ability.

In the second part of our study, we shall examine the intensive and warm relationship between the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and modern Western scientists and show that the radical relativism of a Kalu Rinpoche is also distributed in such circles. Similar philosophical speculations by Europeans can be found, even from earlier times. Heinrich Harrer, who traveled extensively

through Tibet tells in an anecdote of how Westerners readily — even if purely out of coquetry — take on the Tibetan world view. Harrer was assigned to impart to the Tibetans, but in particular the young Dalai Lama, the modern scientific world view. In the year 1948, as he tried to explain to a group of Tibetan nobles at a party that our earth is round and is neither flat nor a continent, he called upon the famous Italian Tibetologist, Giuseppe Tucci, who was also present, to be his witness and support his theory. “To my greatest surprise”, says Harrer, “he took the side of the doubters, since he believed that all sciences must constantly revise their theories and one day the Tibetan teaching could just as well prove to be right” (Harrer, 1984, p. 190).

Thus, following a Buddhization of our world there would be no need for the “converted” population of the world to do without the traditional cosmic “map” of the *Abhidharmakosa*, since in accordance with the Buddhist theory of perception the “map” and the territory it describes are identical. Both, the geography and its likeness in consciousness, ultimately prove themselves to be projections of one and the same spirit.

### *The downfall of the tantric universe*

The mystic bodily structure of the yogi (ADI BUDDHA) duplicates the cosmogram of the *Chakravala*. Correspondingly, the fate of his energy body proves to be identical to the fate of the universe. Just as the fore woman in the form of the *candali* burns up all the coarse elements inside the tantra master step by step, so at the end of time the whole universe becomes the victim of a world fire, which finds its origin at the roots of Mount Meru in the form of *Kalagni*. Step by step, *Kalagni* set the individual segments of the world axis aflame and arises flickering up to the region of the form gods (the Forms). Only in the highest heights, in the sphere of formlessness, does the destructive fire come to a standstill. When there is nothing more to burn the flame is extinguished from alone. That which remains of the whole of *Chakravala* are atomic elements of space (“galactic seeds”), which provide the building blocks for the construction of a new cosmos, and which, in accordance with the law of eternal recurrence, will look exactly the same as the old one and share the same fate as its predecessor.

### *The mandala principle*

The Buddhist universe (*Chakravala*) takes the form of a *mandala*. This Sanskrit word originally meant ‘circle’ and is translated into Tibetan as *kyl-khor*, which means, roughly ‘center and periphery’. At the midpoint of the *Chakravala* we find Mount Meru; the periphery is formed by the gigantic iron wheel we have already mentioned.

There are round mandalas, square mandalas, two- and three-dimensional mandalas, yet in all cases the principle of midpoint and periphery is maintained. The four sides of a square diagram are often equated with the four points of the compass. A five-way concept is also characteristic for the tantric mandala form — with a center and the four points of the compass. The whole

construction is seen as an energy field, from which, as from a platonic Form, tremendous forces can flow out.

A mandala is considered to be the archetype of order. They stand opposed to disorder, anarchy and chaos as contrary principles. Climatic turbulence, bodily sicknesses, desolate and wild stretches of land, barbaric peoples and realms of unbelief all belong to the world of chaos. In order to seize possession of such regions of disorder and ethnic groupings or to put an end to chaotic disturbances (in the body of a sick person for instance), Tibetan lamas perform various rites, which ultimately all lead to the construction of a mandala. This is imposed upon a "chaotic" territory through symbolic actions so as to occupy it; it is mentally projected into the infirm body of a patient so as to dispel his or her illness and the risk of death; it is "pulled over" a zone of protection as a solid fortification against storm and hail.

Like a stencil, a mandala pattern impresses itself upon all levels of being and consciousness. A body, a temple, a palace, a town, or a continent can thus as much have the form of a mandala as a thought, an imagining, a political structure. In this view, the entire geography of a country with its mountains, seas, rivers, towns and shrines possesses an extraterrestrial archetype, a mandala-like prototype, whose earthly likeness it embodies. This transcendent geometry is not visible to an ordinary eye and conceals itself on a higher cosmic level.

Hidden behind the geographical form we perceive, the country of Tibet also has, the lamas believe, a mandala structure, with the capital Lhasa as its center and the surrounding mountain ranges as its periphery. Likewise, the street plan of Lhasa is seen as the impression of a mandala, with the holiest temple in Tibet, the *Jokhang*, as its midpoint. The architectural design of the latter was similarly based on a mandala with the main altar as its center.

The political structure of former Tibet also bore a mandala character. In it the Dalai Lama formed the central sun (the mandala center) about which the other abbots of Tibet orbit as planets. Up until 1959 the Tibetan government was conceived of as a diagram with a center and four sections (sides). "The government is founded upon four divisions", wrote the Seventh Dalai Lama in a state political directive, "These are (1) the court of law, (2) the tax office, (3) the treasury, and (4) the cabinet. They are all aligned to the four points of the compass along the sides of a square which encloses the central figure of the Buddha" (Redwood French, 1985, p. 87).

The prototype of the highest Buddha and the emanations surrounding him was thus transferred to the state leadership and the various offices which were subordinate to it. Of course, the central figure of this political mandala is intended to be the Dalai Lama, since he concentrates the entire worldly and spiritual power in his person. Every single monastery reiterates this political geometry with the respective abbot in the middle.

But the mandala does not just structure the world of appearances; in Buddhist culture it likewise determines the human psyche, the spirit and all the transcendental spheres. It serves as an aid to meditation and as an imaginary palace of the gods in the tantric exercises. On a microcosmic level the energy body of the yogi is seen as the construction of a three-dimensional mandala with the middle channel (*avadhuti*) as the central axis. The whole cosmic-psyche anatomy of the ADI BUDDHA (tantra master) is thus a universal mandala. For this reason we can comprehend Buddhist culture in general (not just the Tibetan variant) as a complicated network of countless mandalas. Further, since these exist at different levels of being, they are encapsulated within one another, include one another, and overlap each other.

Quite rightly one aspect of the Buddhist/tantric mandalas has been compared in cross-cultural studies with the magic circles used by the medieval sorcerers of Europe to summon up spirits, angels, and demons. Then a mandala ("magic circle") can also be used to conjure up Buddhas, gods and *asuras* (demons).

### The Kalachakra sand mandala

Mandalas are employed in all tantric rituals, yet in the *Kalachakra Tantra* it plays an extremely prominent role. Before the seven lower solemnities of the Time Tantra even begin a mandala — a very lavish one indeed — is constructed in the visible external world. Specially trained monks — for the Dalai Lama a special unit from the Namgyal institute — are entrusted with its construction. The "building materials" consist primarily of colored sand, lines and figures of which are applied to a sketch in a complicated process lasting several days. Every line, every geometric form, every shading, every object inserted has its cosmic significance. Since the mandala is built from sand, we are dealing with a very vulnerable work of art, which can easily be destroyed; and this, astonishingly — and as we shall see — is the final goal of the entire complicated procedure.

The sand mandala of the Time Tantras can be deciphered as the visual representation of the whole *Kalachakra* ritual by anyone who understands the symbols depicted there. Such an interpreter would once again come across all the semantic content we have encountered in the above description of the tantric initiatory way.



***The Kalachakra sand mandala***

For this reason, we must regard this external image in sand as just the visible reflection of an inner-spiritual construction which (in another sphere) the yogi imagines as a magnificent palace built upon the peak of Mount Meru. [1] As the center and the two regents of the imagined temple palace we encounter *Kalachakra* and his wisdom consort, *Vishvamata*. They are enthroned as the divine couple in the midpoint of the holy of holies.

This Buddhist “Versailles” is inhabited by a total of 722 deities, the majority of whom represent the individual segments of time: the gods of the twelve-year cycles, the four seasons, twelve months, 360 days, twelve hours, and sixty minutes all dwell here. In addition there are the supernatural entities who represent the five elements, the planets, the 28 phases of the moon and the twelve sensory regions. Very near to the center, i.e., to the divine couple *Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata*, the four meditation Buddhas can be found in union with their partners, then follow a number of Bodhisattvas.

The architecture of the *Kalachakra* palace encompasses five individual mandalas, each enclosing the next. Segments which lie closer to the center (the divine couple) are accorded a higher spiritual evaluation than those which are further away. The fivefold organization of the building complex is supposed to reflect, among other things, the five rings (the five elements) which lie around Mount Meru in Buddhist cosmography. Likewise the height and breadth of the palace are

in their relation to one another a copy of the proportions of the cosmos. Thus the *Kalachakra* mandala is also a microcosmic likeness of the Buddhist universe.

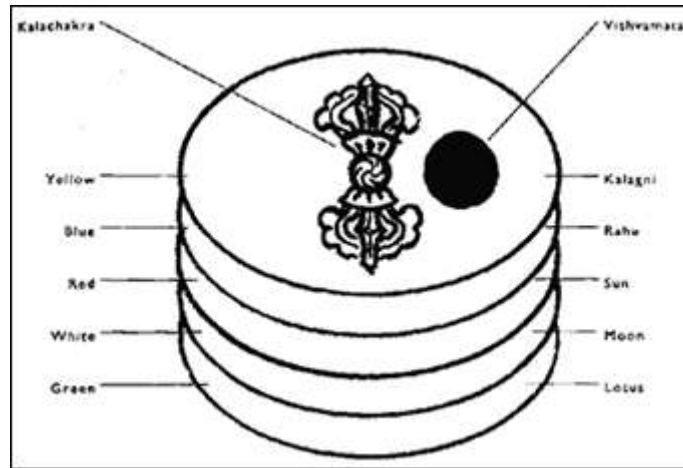
Anyone entering the *Kalachakra* palace from outside progresses through a five-stage initiation which culminates in the inner sanctum where the primordial couple, *Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata*, are in union. But seen from within, each of the individual mandala segments and the deities dwelling within them represents an outward radiation (emanation) of the divine first couple.

Just as the *macrocosmic* mandala of the universe with Mount Meru as its axis can be rediscovered in the *microcosmic* body of the yogi (ADI BUDDHA), so too the *Kalachakra* palace is identical with his mystic body. We must never lose sight of this. For this reason, the detailed description of the *Kalachakra* sand mandala which now follows must also be regarded as the anatomy of the tantra master (ADI BUDDHA). The anatomical “map” of the ADI BUDDHA thus exhibits a number of different images: on one occasion it possesses the structure which corresponds to that of the entire universe, on another it forms that of the *Kalachakra* palace, or it corresponds to the complicated construction of the *dasakaro vasi* (“the Power of Ten”) described above. But in all of these models the basic mandala-like pattern of a center and a periphery is always the same.

### *The structure of the Kalachakra palace*

The primordial divine couple, the time god *Kalachakra* and the time goddess *Vishvamata*, govern from the center of the *Kalachakra* palace. They are depicted in the visible world of the sand mandala by a blue *vajra* (*Kalachakra*) and an orange dot (*Vishvamata*). Directly beneath them a yellow layer of sand which represents *Kalagni*, the destructive fire, is found; beneath this there is a blue layer, symbol of the apocalyptic planet, *Rahu*. Layers for the sun, the moon, and for a lotus flower follow. The destruction of the primordial couple is thus, through the presence of *Kalagni* and *Rahu*, already preprogrammed in the center of the sand mandala, or rather of the palace of time.

*Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata* are surrounded by eight lotus petals (all of this is made from colored sand). Now these do not — as one might assume — represent eight further emanation couples, but rather— in the official interpretation — we encounter the eight *shaktis* here. We are thus dealing with eight female beings, eight energy bearers (or eight “sacrificial goddesses”). They correspond to the eight *karma mudras* who surround the tantra master in union with his partner in the *ganachakra*, the twelfth level of initiation (the vase initiation). However, when we think back, there was talk of ten *Shaktis* before. We reach the number “ten” by counting two feminine aspects of *Vishvamata* (the central goddess) in addition to the eight “sacrificial goddesses” (lotus petals). Together they signalize the ten chief winds (the *dasakaro vasi*) with which the tantra master controls all the microcosmic energies in his mystic body.



***The center of the Kalachakra sand mandala***

Thus, within the innermost segment of the palace of time the whole tantric sacrificial scenario is sketched out using only a very few symbols, since the ten *shaktis* (originally ten women) are, as we have described in detail above, manipulated and eradicated as autonomous individuals in the *ganachakra* ritual so that their feminine energies can be transferred to the tantra master. This central segment of the sand mandala bears the name of the “mandala of great bliss” (Brauen, 1992, p. 133).

The second, adjacent complex is called the “mandala of enlightened wisdom”. Here there are sixteen pillars which symbolize different kinds of emptiness and which divide the space into sixteen different rooms. The latter are occupied by couples who are in fact peaceful deities. They are represented in the mandala by small piles of colored sand. In this part of the palace ten (!) vases (*kalashas*) can also be found. These are filled with revolting substances like excrement, urine, blood, human flesh, and so on, which are transformed into bliss-conferring nectars during the ritual by the tantra master. These vessels symbolize once again the ten “sacrificial goddesses” or the ten *mudras* of the *ganachakra*. In the first precise description of a *Kalachakra* ritual by a Western academic (Ferdinand Lessing), reference is made to the feminine symbolic significance of the vases: the “lamas ... proceed to the podium, each with a large water pot (*kalasha*). They move it to and fro. It symbolizes the young lady of the initiation, who plays such a great role in this cult” (Wayman, 1973, p. 62). Yet again, the *kalashas* correspond to the ten winds or the “Power of Ten” (*dasakaro vasi*) and thereby to the diamond body of the ADI BUDDHA.

On our tour of the palace of time, the third segment with the name of “the mandala of enlightened mind” follows. This is the house of the Bodhisattvas and Buddhas. The latter, the Dhyani or meditation Buddhas, reside here in close embrace with their consorts: to the East, the black *Amoghasiddhi* with *Locana*; to the South, the red *Ratnasambhava* with *Mamaki*; to the North, the white *Amitabha* with *Pandara*; to the West, *Vairocana* in the arms of *Tara*. The areas between the points of the compass are likewise occupied by Buddha couples. All the Bodhisattvas who dwell

the in the “mandala of enlightened mind” are also portrayed in the *yab-yum* posture (of sexual union). This third segment demonstrates most vividly that Tantrism derives the emanation of time from the erotic love of divine couples.

The fourth “mandala of enlightened speech” follows. Within it are found eight lotus flowers, each of which itself has eight petals. Once again the pattern of the *ganachakra*, which we have already encountered in the center of the sand mandala, is repeated in this bouquet. In the middle of each of the eight lotuses a couple sits in close embrace and on each of the eight surrounding petals we can discern a goddess. This makes a total of eighty deities (64 *shaktis*, 8 female partners, and 8 male deities).

The large number of *shaktis*, “daughters” of the mudras “sacrificed” in the *ganachakra*, is an indicator of how fundamentally the idea of the tantric female sacrifice determines the doctrine of time and its artistic representation. At the gates which lead out from the fourth segment into the third “mandala of enlightened mind”, we are once again confronted with the symbolic representation of “sacrificial goddesses”. Aside from this, 36 further *shaktis*, who represent the root syllables of the Sanskrit alphabet and thereby the building blocks of language, live in this building complex.

As the final and outermost segment of the mandala palace we enter the “body mandala”. There we meet the 360 deities of the days of the year. Here too we encounter the basic pattern of the *ganachakra*. There are twelve large lotuses, each with 28 petals. In the center of each flower a god and a goddess embrace one another, all around them sit 28 goddesses grouped into three rows. Each lotus thus exhibits 30 deities, multiplying by twelve we have the 360 day gods (five days are not calculated). In addition we meet in the body mandala twelve pairs of wrathful deities and 36 goddesses of desire.

We have nonetheless not yet described all the grounds of the palace. The five square architectural units already mentioned are namely bordered by six circular segments. Numerous symbols of bliss like wheels, wish-granting jewels, shells, mirrors, and so on, rest in the arcs (quadrants) which are formed between the last square and the first circle. The five subsequent circles symbolize the elements in the following order: earth, water, fire, wind, and space. Cemeteries are to be found on circles three and four, depicted in the form of wheels. In the imagination they are inhabited by ten horrifying dakinis with their partners. From a Buddhist point of view this “ring of the dead” signifies that only he who has surmounted his bodily existence may enter the mandala palace.

The fifth circle of space is represented by a chain of golden *vajras*. The whole mandala is surrounded by a circle of flames as a sixth ring. According to a number of commentators this is supposed to represent the wisdom of Buddha; however, if we further pursue the fate of the sand

mandala, it must be associated with the “world fire” (*Kalagni*) which in the end burns down the palace of the time gods.

As aesthetic and peaceful as the sand mandala may appear to be to a Western observer, it still conceals behind it the frozen ornament of the sacrificial ritual of Tantrism. Every single female figure which inhabits the palace of time, be she a *dakini*, *shakti*, or a “sacrificial goddess”, is the bearer of the so sought after “*gynergy*” which the yogi has appropriated through his sexual magic practices so as to then let it flow as the power source of his androgynous mystic body. The *Kalachakra* palace is thus an alchemic laboratory for the appropriation of life energies. In the ritual fate of the sand mandala we shall unmistakably demonstrate that it is a gigantic sacrificial altar. It is not just the *shaktis* who are sacrificed, but the erotic couples as well, who delight the temple with their untroubled pleasures of love, indeed the time god (*Kalachakra*) and the time goddess (*Vishvamata*) themselves. The downfall of them all is preordained, their fate is sealed.

### ***The construction of the Kalachakra sand mandala***

The construction of the *Kalachakra* sand mandala is a complex and multilayered procedure which is carried out by a number of specially trained lamas. The “master builder “ of the diagram and the spiritual leader of the *Kalachakra* initiation need not always be the same person. They are so to speak the assistants of the tantra master. Nonetheless, at the outset the latter makes the following appeal to the time god: “Oh, victorious *Kalachakra*, lord of knowledge, I prostrate myself to the protector and possessor of compassion. I am making a mandala here out of love and compassion for my disciples and as an offering in respect to you. Oh *Kalachakra*, please be kind and remain close to me. I, the *vajra* master, am creating this mandala to purify the obstructions of all beings. Therefore, always be considerate of my disciples and me, and please reside in the mandala” (quoted by Bryant, 1992, p. 141).

The grounds sought out for the ritual are now subjected to a rigorous examination, the so-called “purifying of the site”. Monks investigate the ground, measurements are taken, mantras and sutras are quoted. Subsequently it comes to a highly provocative scene, in which the local spirits and the earth goddess are violently forced to agree to the construction of the mandala.



***Vajravega – the terrifying emanation of Kalachakra***

For this purpose one of the lamas takes on the appearance of *Vajravega*, that is, he visualizes himself as this deity. *Vajravega* is blue in color, has three necks and 24 hands. As clothing he wears a tigerskin skirt, decorated with snakes and bones. He is considered to be the terrifying emanation of the time god *Kalachakra*. He can evoke sixty wrathful protective deities from out of his inscrutable heart, who then storm out through his ears, nostrils, eyes, mouth, urethra, anus, and from an opening in the top of his skull. Among these are found zombies, vampires and dakinis with the heads of animals.

In the imaginations of the lamas who conduct the ritual, this monster now drags in the impending local spirits with iron hooks and, once they have been bound in chains, nails them down in the ten directions with ritual daggers. A further ten wrathful deities are projected into each of these daggers (*phurbas*). There are indications which must be regarded seriously that in the performance of the *Kalachakra* rituals it is not just the local spirits, but likewise the earth mother (*Srinmo*) who embody the nailed down victims. This myth of the nailing of *Srinmo* played a central “national” role in the construction of Tibetan temples, which actually represent nothing more than three-dimensional mandalas. We shall come to speak of this in detail in the second part of our study.

Now the tantra master solemnly circles the mandala location in a clockwise direction, and sprinkles it with various substances and holy water. After this the monks who participate in the ritual imagine in their spirits that this location is covered in numerous small *vajras*.

Afterwards there is a significant demonstration of power: The tantra master sits down on his own in the center of the mandala space, faces the East and says the following: "I shall build on this place a mandala in the manner in which I have imagined it" (quoted by Brauen, 1992, p. 77). With this act of occupation he makes it unmistakably clear who the lord of the ritual action is. Further liturgical actions follow.

The tantra master evokes the terrifying deity, *Vajravega*, anew, and once again drives potential disruptive spirits out of the mandala grounds. He is so filled with wrathful deities that horror figures who are supposed to protect the mandala even emanate from out of the soles of his feet. Afterwards the place is occupied by the symbols of the five Dhyani Buddhas. On the table top, the lama lays a lotus, a sword, a wish-granting jewel, a wheel and, in the middle, a *vajra*. This centrally placed "thunderbolt" demonstrates yet again the masculine control of the earth.

This dominating, patriarchal behavior has not always been present in the history of Buddhism. In a famous scene from the life of the historical Buddha, he calls upon the earth to bear witness to his enlightenment by touching it with his right hand (*Bhumisparsa mudra*). Tantric Buddhism has preserved this scene among its Buddha legends, but has added a small change; here Shakyamuni makes the gesture of stroking the earth with a *vajra*, the scepter of phallic power. "This instrument is indispensable for the liturgy of the Great Path", Giuseppe Tucci writes, "The earth transformed by the *vajra* becomes diamond" (Tucci, 1982, p. 97). As spiritually valuable a symbol as the diamond may appear to be, it is not just an image of purity but is also a metaphor for sterility. Between the *vajra* and the earth lies the opposition between spirit and life, or — as the American Buddhist Ken Wilber would express it — the "noosphere" (the realm of the spirit) and the "biosphere" (the realm of nature). In that the earth is transformed into a diamond by the tantric gesture of the Buddha, nature is symbolically transformed into pure spirit and woman into a man.

But let us return to the script which describes the construction of the sand mandala. After the fixation of the earth spirits or the earth mother, the "procession of the ten vases" which are filled with nectars follows. These are carried by monks around the ritual table upon which the sand mandala will be built. Yet again the number ten! The ten vases, the ten powers, the ten winds, the ten *shaktis* — they are all variations on the ten *mudras*, who participated and were "sacrificed" in the highest initiation of the *ganachakra* ritual.

All their energies flow into *Vishvamata*, the chief consort of the *Kalachakra* deity. The time goddess is symbolized by a seashell which the monks lay in the middle of the ritual table and

which is to be filled with the essences from all ten vessels (vases). Here the shell represents the feminine element at its highest concentration.

The tantra master now ties a golden *vajra* to a thread. He puts the other end of the thread to his heart and then lays the “thunderbolt” with emphasis *on* the central shell. The sovereignty of the masculine principle (*vajra*) over the feminine principle (the *shell*) could not be demonstrated more unequivocally. Afterwards, all the ritual objects are removed from the mandala.

The time has now come to begin with the preparatory sketches of the sand mandala. The monks commence with the “snapping of the wisdom string”. Here we are dealing with five different threads which symbolize the five Dhyani Buddhas with their consorts. Through a ritual “plucking” of these strings, the texts tell us, the mandala site becomes occupied by these five supreme beings. [2]

After many recitations the monks now begin with the actual artistic work, surrounded by numerous containers filled with the colored sand. This is carefully applied to the preliminary sketch with a type of funnel. This requires extreme precision, since the sand must form hair-thin lines, and there are even a number of drawings of figures to be rendered in sand. Work begins in the middle and proceeds outwards, that is, the center of the mandala is created first and one then works step by step towards the periphery. It takes another five days before the artwork is completed.

At the end, the complete work is surrounded by ten (!) ritual daggers (*phurbas*) which act as protective symbols. Likewise, ten (!) vases which are supposed to represent the ten *shaktis* are arranged around the mandala. Since all the tenfold symbols in the *Kalachakra Tantra* stand in a homologous relation to the “sacrificed” *mudras* (*shaktis*, dakinis, yoginis) of the *ganachakra* ritual described above, the mandala, with- we repeat — its numerous sequences of ten, is an ornamental demonstration of the “tantric female sacrifice” also described above.

Once the vases and daggers have been put in place, the whole artwork is hidden behind a curtain, as if the sacrificial scenario concealed behind the sacred work ought to be masked. To close, the monks perform another dance. Anyone who has up till now doubted whether the *Kalachakra* sand mandala concerns the visual portrayal of a sacrificial rite, actually ought to be convinced by the name of this dance. It is called the “ritual dance of the sacrificial goddesses”.

### ***The destruction of the mandala***

The sand mandala accompanies the seven lower levels of the public *Kalachakra* ritual as the mute and earthly likeness of a transcendental tantric divine palace. It is supposed to help the initiand create a corresponding architectural work with all its inhabitants within his imagination and to thus give it a spiritual existence. As in the real construction, within the imagination work also begins at the center of the mandala, in which *Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata* are united. Starting from there, the initiand visualizes step by step the construction of the whole palace of time with its 722 gods. He thus commences at the inner sanctum, and then imagines every mandala segment which follows, ending with the periphery of the ring of flame, which blazes around the entire architectural construct.

During the imaginary construction of the mandala, the initiand is suddenly required to imagine an extremely puzzling scene which we would like to examine more closely: “Out of the syllable HUM”, it says in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, “*Vajravega* emanates in the heart of the meditator [the initiand], the wrathful form of *Kalachakra* — grinning and with gnashing teeth *Vajravega* stands upon a chariot drawn by a fabulous being; he thrusts a hook into the navel of *Kalachakra*, ties his hands up, threatens him with weapons and drags him before the meditator, in whose heart he finally dissolves himself” (Brauen, 1992, p. 114).

What is happening? *Vajravega*, the wrathful emanation of the time god, suddenly turns against his own “emanation father”, *Kalachakra*, and brutally drags him before the meditating adept. In this scene a distinction is thus drawn between *Kalachakra* and *Vajravega*. Is this — as Martin Brauen suspects — to be interpreted as the symbolic repetition of the act of birth, which is indeed also associated with pain?

Such an interpretation does not seem convincing to us. It seems far more plausible to recognize a somewhat obscure variant of the dark demon *Rahu* in the *Vajravega* figure, who destroys the sun and the moon in the *Kalachakra Tantra* so as to claim power over time in their stead. Brauen also indirectly concedes this when he compares the aggressive emergence of *Vajravega* with the activation of the “middle channel” (*avadhuti*) in the mystic body of the yogi and the associated destruction of both energy streams (the sun and moon). The same procedure is also regarded to be the chief task of *Rahu*, and likewise, as we have described above, the middle channel bears the name of the dark planet (*Rahu*). Be that as it may, the destructive arrival of *Vajravega* heralds the fate of the whole sand mandala and of the palace of time hidden behind it.

During the seven lower solemnities of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, the mandala artwork is left standing. At the end of the whole performance the tantra master recites a number of prayers and certain mantras. He then circles the sand mandala, removing with his fingers the 722 gods who were scattered across it in the form of seeds and laying them on a tray. At the same time he imagines that they enter his heart. He thus absorbs all the time energies and transforms them into aspects of his own mystic body. He then grasps a *vajra*, symbol of his diamond masculinity, and begins to destroy the sandy “divine palace” with it. The whole impressive work dissolves into colorful heaps and is later swept together. The monks tip the colored mixture into a vase. The master

sprinkles a little of this in his head, and gives a further mini-portion to his pupils. With prayers and song a procession carries the sandy contents of the vase to a river and surrenders it there to the *nagas* (snake gods) as a gift.

But an important gesture is still to come. The tantra master returns to the site of the mandala and with water washes off the white basis lines remaining on the site. Then he removes the ten ritual daggers. Facing the East he now seats himself on the cleansed mandala site, *vajra* and bell in his hands, the absolute lord of both sexes (*Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata*), of time and of the universe.

This destruction of the sand mandala is usually seen as an act which is supposed to draw attention to the transience of all being. But this forgets that the palace of time is only destroyed as an *external* construction and that it continues to exist in the *interior* of the highest tantra master (as ADI BUDDHA). In his mystic body, *Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata* live on as the two polar currents of time, albeit under his absolute control. At the end of the ritual, the yogi (ADI BUDDHA) has transformed himself into a divine palace. Then his *microcosmic* body has become identical to the *Kalachakra* palace; we can now rediscover all the symbols which we encountered there as forces within his energy body.

### **The world ruler: The sociopolitical exercise of power by the ADI Buddha**

In his political function the ADI BUDDHA is a world ruler, a “universal sovereign”, a “world king” (*dominus mundi*), an “emperor of the universe”, a *Chakravartin*. The early Buddhists still drew a distinction between a *Buddha* and a *Chakravartin*. Hence we can read in the legends of Buddhism’s origins how a holy man prophesied to Shakyamuni’s father that his wife, *Maya*, would soon bear an enlightened one (a *Buddha*) or a world ruler (*Chakravartin*), depending upon which this son would as a young man later decide to be. Gautama chose the way of the “spiritual” Buddha and not that of the “worldly” *Chakravartin*, who in the customs of his time also had to act as military leader alongside his political duties.

In *Mahayana* Buddhism this distinction between a *dominus mundi* and an enlightened being increasingly disappears, yet the *Chakravartin* possesses exclusively peaceful characteristics. All his “conquests”, reports the scholar Vasubandhu (fourth or fifth century C.E.), are nonviolent. The potentates of the world voluntarily and unresistingly subject themselves on the basis of his receptive radiation. They bow down before him and say: “Welcome, O mighty king. Everything belongs to you, O mighty king!” (quoted by Armelin, n.d., p. 21). He is mostly incarnated as an *avatar*, as the reincarnation of a divine savior, who should lead humanity out of its earthly misery and into paradise.

In *Vajrayana* Buddhism, especially in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, the *Chakravartin* is the successful result of the sexual magic rites we describe above. The “asocial” yogi, who during his initiatory phase hangs around cemeteries and with prostitutes like an outlaw has become a radiant king whose commands are obeyed by nations. The Time Tantra thus reveals itself to be a means of “conquering” the world, not just spiritually but also in power political terms; in the end the imperial idea of a *Chakravartin* includes the whole universe. Boundlessly expanding energies are accumulated here in a single being (the “political” ADI BUDDHA).

The eminently political character of the Indian *Chakravartin* makes him an ideal for Tibetan Lamaism, which could first be realized, however, in the person of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682). Before the “Great Fifth” ascended the throne, the arch-abbots of the individual Lamaist sects — whether voluntarily or by necessity aside — accorded the title of world ruler only to the mighty Chinese Emperors or, depending on the political situation, to individual Mongolian Khans. The Tibetan hierarchs themselves “only” claimed the role of a Buddha, an enlightened being, whom they nonetheless considered superior to the *Chakravartin*. The Fifth Dalai Lama, who combined in his person both worldly and spiritual power for the first time in the history of Tibet, was also still careful about *publicly* describing himself as *Chakravartin*. This could have provoked his Mongolian allies and the “Ruler on the Dragon Throne” (the Emperor of China). Such restraint was a part of the diplomacy of the Tibet of old; or rather, since the Dalai Lamas were during their enthronement handed the highest symbol of universal rule — the “golden wheel” — they were the “true”, albeit hidden, rulers of the world, at least in the minds of the Tibetan clergy. The worldly potentates of neighboring states were at any rate accorded the role of a protector.

We shall come to speak in detail about whether such cosmocratic images still excite the imagination of the current Fourteenth Dalai Lama in the second part of our study. In any case, the *Kalachakra Tantra* which he has placed at the center of his ritual politics contains the phased initiatory path at the end of which the Lion Throne of a *Chakravartin* rears up.

The “golden wheel” (*chakra*) is regarded as the world ruler’s coat of arms and gave him his name, which when translated from Sanskrit means “wheel turner”. Already at birth a *Chakravartin* bears a signum in the form of a wheel on his hand and feet as graphic proof of his sovereignty. In Buddhism the wheel symbol was originally understood to be the “teaching” (the *Dharma*) and the first “wheel turner” was no lesser than the Buddha himself, who set the “wheel of *Dharma*” in motion by distributing his truths among the people and among the other beings. Later, in *Mahayana* Buddhism, the golden wheel already indicated “The Great Circle of Power and Rule” (Simpson, 1991, p. 45). The *Chakravartin* was referred to as the “King of the Golden Wheel”. This is the title given to the “Emperor of Peace”, Ashoka (273–236 B.C.E.), after he had united India and with great success converted it to Buddhism; but is also a name which the Dalai Lama acquires when the “golden wheel” is presented to him during his enthronement.

A Buddhist world ruler grasps the “wheel of command”, symbol of his absolute force of command. In the older texts the stress is primarily on his military functions. He is the supreme commander

of his superbly armed forces. As “king and politician”, the *Chakravartin* is a sovereign who reigns over all the states on earth. The leaders of the tribes and nations are subordinate to him. His epithet is “one who rules with his own will, even the kingdoms of other kings” (quoted by Armelin, n.d., p. 8). He is thus also known as the “king of kings”. His aegis extends not just over humanity, but likewise over Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, wrathful kings, gods, demons, *nagas* (snake gods), masculine and feminine deities, animals and spirits. Of his followers he demands passionate devotion to the point of ecstasy.

The seven “valuable treasures” which are available to a *Chakravartin* are (1) the wheel, (2) the wish-granting jewel, (3) the wonder horse, (4) the elephant, (5) the minister, (6) the general, and (7) the princess. Sometimes, the judge and the minister of finance are also mentioned. [3]

Opinions differ from text to text about the spatial expansion of power of the *Chakravartin*. Sometimes he “only” controls our earth, sometimes — as in the *Kalachakra Tantra* — the entire universe with all its suns and planets. This is — as we have already shown — described in the *Abhidharmakosha*, the Buddhist cosmology, as a gigantic wheel with Meru the world mountain as its central axis. The circumference is formed by unscaleable chains of mountains made of pure iron, from whence the name of this cosmic model is derived — *Chakravala*, that is, ‘iron wheel’. The *Chakravartin* is thus sovereign of an “iron wheel” of astronomical proportions.

In terms of *time*, the Buddhist writings nominate varying lengths of reign for the *Chakravartin*. In one text, as a symbol of control the supreme regent carries in his hand a golden, silver, copper, or iron wheel depending upon the eon (Simpson, 1991, p. 270). This corresponds to the Indo-European division of the ages of the world in which these become increasingly short and “worse” nearer the end. For this reason, world rulers of the golden age reign many millions of years longer than the ruler of the iron age. The *Chakravartin* also represents the *Kalachakra* deity, he is the bearer of the universal “time wheel” and hence the “Lord of History”.

As *lawmaker*, he monitors that human norms stay in keeping with the divine, i.e., Buddhocratic ones. “He is the incarnate representation of supreme and universal Law”, writes the religious studies scholar, Coomaraswamy (Coomaraswamy, 1978, p. 13, n. 14a). As a consequence, the world ruler governs likewise as “protector” of the cosmic and of the sociopolitical order.

As a universal guru he sets the “wheel of the teaching” (*Dharmachakra*) in motion, in memory of the famous sermon by the historical Buddha in the deer park of Benares, where the “first turning of the Wheel of the Word” took place (Coomaraswamy, 1979, p. 25). As a consequence, the *Chakravartin* is the supreme world teacher and therefore also holds the “wheel of truth” in his hands. As cosmic “wheel turner” he has overcome the “wheel of life and death” through which the unenlightened must still wander.

In the revolutionary milieu of the tantras (since the fourth century C.E.), the political, war-like aspects of the “wheel turner” known from Hinduism became current once more, to then reach — as we shall see — their most aggressive form in the *Shambhala myth* of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. The *Chakravartin* now leads a “just” war, and is both a Buddha (or at least a Bodhisattva) and the glorious leader of an army in one person. The “lord of the wheel” thus displays clear military political traits. As the emblem of control the “wheel” also symbolizes his chariot with which he leads an invincible army. This army conquers and subjugates the entire globe and establishes a universal Buddhocracy. The Indian religious scholar, Coomaraswamy, also makes reference to the destructive power of the wheel. Like the discus of the Hindu god *Vishnu*, it can shave off the heads of the troops of entire armies in seconds.

Destruction and resurrection are thus equally evoked by the figure of the *Chakravartin*. He therefore also appears at the intersection of two eras (the iron and the subsequent golden age) and represent both the downfall of the old and the origin of the new eon. This gives him marked apocalyptic and messianic characteristics. He is incarnated as both world destroyer and world redeemer, as universal exterminator and universal savior.

### Profane and spiritual power

The history of India, just like that of medieval Europe, is shaped by the clash between spiritual and worldly power. “Pope” and “Emperor” also opposed one another on the subcontinent in the form of Brahman and King, the battle between *sacerdotium* (ecclesiastical rule) and *regnum* (kingly rule) was also a recurrent political topic in the India of old. Interestingly, this dispute is regarded in both the Occident and in Asia as a gender conflict and the two sex roles are transferred onto the two pretenders to power. Sometimes the king represented the masculine and the priest the feminine, on other occasions it was the reverse, depending on which political party currently had the say.

This long-running topic of the “political battle of the sexes” was picked up by the intellectual elite of European fascism in the thirties of this century. The fascists had an ideological interest in conceding the primary role in the state and in society to the warrior type and thus the monarchy. It was a widespread belief at that time that the hypocritical and cunning priestly caste had for centuries impeded the kings in their exercise of control so as to seize power for themselves. Such warrior-friendly views of history influenced the national socialist mythologist, Alfred Rosenberg, just as they did the Italian Julius Evola, who for a time acted as “spiritual” advisor to Mussolini. Both believed the masculine principle to be obviously at work in the “king” and the inferior feminine counterforce in the “priest”. “The monarchy is entitled to precedence over the priesthood, exactly as in the symbolism [where] the sun has precedence over the moon and the man over the woman”, Evola wrote (Evola, 1982, p. 101).

The Indian philosopher of religion, Ananda Coomaraswami, answers him with a counter-thesis: originally the king was “unquestionably feminine” and the priest masculine: “The *sacerdotium* and

the man are the intellectual, and the *regnum* and the woman the active elements in what should be literally a symphony” (Coomaraswamy, 1978, p. 6). Thus we find here the conception, widespread in India, that the feminine is active, the masculine passive or contemplative, and that control can be exercised through meditation (such as through holding the breath). In this we are confronted with the view that the practice of yoga is transferable to politics. Such a conception is in fact characteristic of Hinduism. In Tantric Buddhism, however, the order is reversed, as it is in the West: the goddess is passive and the god active. For this reason the fascist, Julius Evola, for whom the heroic masculine principle is entitled to the royal throne, was much more strongly attracted to Buddhist *Vajrayana* than to the Hindu tantras.

But when the *sacerdotium* unites with the *regnum* in one person, as in the case of the Dalai Lama, then the two celebrate a “mystic wedding”. The powers of the two forces flow together in a great current out of which a universal “wheel turner”, a *Chakravartin* arises, who has condensed within himself the masculine and feminine principle, worldly and priestly power, and is thus capable of exercising supreme control. Ananda Coomaraswamy has emotionally described this exceptional situation with the following words: “It is, then, only when the priest and the king, the human representatives of sky and earth, God and his kingdom, are ‘united in the performance of the rite’, only when ‘thy will is done on earth as it is in heaven’, that there is both a giving and a taking, not indeed an equality but a true reciprocity. Peace and prosperity, and fullness of life in every sense of the words, are the fruits of the ‘marriage’ of the temporal power to the spiritual authority, just as they must be of the marriage of the ‘woman’ to the ‘man’ on whatever level of reference. For ‘verily, when a mating is effected, then each achieves the other’s desire’; and in the case of the ‘mating’ of the *sacerdotium* and the *regnum*, whether in the outer realms or within you, the desire of the two partners are for ‘good’ here and hereafter” (Coomaraswamy, 1978, p. 69). The marriage of the masculine and the feminine principle, which here forms the foundation for absolute political power, shows the *Chakravartin* to be an androgyne, a bisexual superhuman.

Neither Coomaraswamy nor Evola appear to have the slightest doubts about according feminine energies to masculine individuals and institutions in their theories. For this reason, the patriarchal power visions of Tantrism are as obvious in the two authors’ interpretations of history as they otherwise only are in the original Tibetan texts. Since for Coomaraswamy the feminine is incarnated in the “king”, and as such may never rule alone, the religious philosopher considers the autonomous power of the kings to be the origin of evil: “But, if the King cooperating with and assimilated to the higher power is thus the Father of his people, it is none the less true that satanic and deadly possibilities inhere in the Temporal Power: When the *Regnum* pursues its own devices, when the feminine [!] half of the Administration asserts its independence, when Might presumes to rule without respect for Right, when the ‘woman’ demands her ‘rights’[!], then these lethal possibilities are realised; the King and the Kingdom, the family and the house, alike are destroyed and disorder prevails. It was by an assertion of his independence and a claim to ‘equal rights’ that Lucifer fell headlong from Heaven and became Satan, the ‘enemy’” (Coomaraswamy, 1978, p. 69). The equation of the feminine with the epitome of evil is here no less clear and crass than it is in the work of the fascist, Julius Evola, who interprets our “unhappy” age as the result of a “gynocracy” which was prepared by the priests of the various religions.

That the role of the *Chakravartin* is reserved exclusively for men must be a self-evident assumption in the light of what has been said above. In a very early Buddhist text we already find this succinct formulation:

*It is impossible and can not be  
that the woman a Holy One, a Completely Awakened [One]  
or a King World-Conqueror [Chakravartin] may embody:  
such a case does not occur.*

(quoted by Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 172)

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#### Footnotes:

[1] As we have already seen, the world mountain itself with its surrounding cosmic circles possesses the form of a huge mandala.

[2] However, the actual marking up of the diagram is carried out with a cord coated in chalk powder, which is placed in particular directions on the ritual table. With a brief pluck upon this cord the powder is transferred to the surface and forms a line there. Together, all the lines sketch the pattern of the sand mandala foundations.

[3] Where his *golden wheel*, (1), appears on the horizon the Buddhist teaching is spread. "This wheel has a thousand rays. The monarch who possesses it is called 'the Holy King who causes the wheel to turn', because from the moment of his possessing it, the wheel turns and traverses the universe according to the thoughts of the king" (Simpson, 1991, p. 269). Thanks to the *wish-granting jewel*, (2), the world ruler need only raise his hand and gold coins start to rain down (Coomaraswamy, 1979, fig. 19). The *wonder horse*, (3), transports him anywhere in next to no time. The *elephant*, (4), is obedient and represents the workforce among his subjects. The *minister*, (5), has no ulterior motives and stands by him with moral and tactical support. The *general*, (6), has the power to defeat all enemies. The body of the *princess*, (7), smells of sandalwood and from her mouth comes the scent of the blue lotus. She performs the functions of a royal mother: "Contact with her provokes no passions; all men regard her as their mother or sister. ... She gives birth to many sons [!]. When her husband is absent (she maintains chastity) and never succumbs to the pleasures of the five senses" (Tayé, 1995, p. 136). — With the following seven "semi-valuable" treasures it becomes even clearer how the magic political objects of the *Chakravartin* coincide with those of the tantric *Maha Siddha* (Grand Sorcerer): (1) the *sword*, which defends the king's laws; (2) a *tent* which withstands any weather; (3) a *palace* full of goddesses playing music; (4) a *robe* impenetrable for any weapon and immune against fire; (5) a *garden of paradise* full of wondrous plants and animals; (6) a

*sleeping place* which repels all false emotions and dreams and produces a clear awareness; and (7) a pair of *seven league boots* with which any point in the universe can be reached in a flash.

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## 10. THE AGGRESSIVE MYTH OF SHAMBHALA

The role of the ADI BUDDHA or rather of the Chakravartin is not just discussed in general terms in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, rather, in the “myth of Shambhala” the Time Tantra presents concrete political objectives. In this myth statements are made about the authority of the world monarch, the establishment and administration of his state, the organization of his army, and about a strategic schedule for the conquest of the planet. But let us first consider what exactly the *Shambhala myth* can be understood to be.

According to legend, the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni, taught the king of *Shambhala*, Suchandra, the *Kalachakra Mulatantra*, and initiated him into the secret doctrine. The original text contained 12,000 verses. It was later lost, but an abridged version survived. If we use the somewhat arbitrary calendar of the Time Tantra as a basis, the encounter between Shakyamuni and Suchandra took place in the year 878 B.C.E. The location of the instruction was *Dhanyakataka* close to the Mount Vulture Heap near Rajagriha (Rajgir) in southern India. After Suchandra had asked him for instruction, the Buddha himself assumed the form of *Kalachakra* and preached to him from a Lion Throne surrounded by numerous Bodhisattvas and gods.

Suchandra reigned as the king of *Shambhala*, a legendary kingdom somewhere to the north of India. He did not travel alone to be initiated in *Dhanyakataka*, but was accompanied by a courtly retinue of 96 generals, provincial kings and governors. After the initiation he took the tantra teaching back with him to his empire (Shambhala) and made it the state religion there; according to other reports, however, this only happened after seven generations.

Suchandra recorded the *Kalachakra Mulatantra* from memory and composed a number of comprehensive commentaries on it. One of his successors (Manjushrikirti) wrote an abridged edition, known as the *Kalachakra Laghutantra*, a compendium of the original sermon. This 1000-verse text has survived in toto and still today serves as a central text. Manjushrikirti's successor, King Pundarika, composed a detailed commentary upon the *Laghutantra* with the name of *Vimalaprabha* ('immaculate light'). These two texts (the *Kalachakra Laghutantra* and the *Vimalaprabha*) were brought back to India in the tenth century by the *Maha Siddha* Tilopa, and from there reached Tibet, the “Land of Snows” a hundred years later. But only fragments of the original text, the *Kalachakra Mulatantra*, have survived. The most significant fragment is called *Sekkodesha* and has been commented upon the *Maha Siddha* Naropa.

### Geography of the kingdom of Shambhala

The kingdom of *Shambhala*, in which the *Kalachakra* teaching is practiced as the state religion, is surrounded by great secrecy, just as is its first ruler, *Suchandra*. Then he is also regarded as an incarnation of the Bodhisattva *Vajrapani*, the “Lord of Occult Knowledge”. For centuries the Tibetan lamas have deliberately mystified the wonderland, that is, they have left the question of its existence or nonexistence so open that one has to paradoxically say that it exists *and* it does not. Since it is a spiritual empire, its borders can only be crossed by those who have been initiated into the secret teachings of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Invisible for ordinary mortal eyes, for centuries the wildest speculation about the geographic location Shambhala have circulated. In “concrete” terms, all that is known is that it can be found to the north of India, “beyond the River Sitha”. But no-one has yet found the name of this river on a map. Thus, over the course of centuries the numerous *Shambhala seekers* have nominated all the even conceivable regions, from Kashmir to the North Pole and everywhere in between.



**A mandala of Shambhala**

The most widespread opinion in the studies tends toward seeking the original region in what is today the desert of the Tarim Basin (*Tarim Pendi*). Many lamas claim it still exists there, but is screened from curious eyes by a magical curtain and is well guarded. Indeed, the syncretist elements which are to be found in the *Kalachakra Tantra* speak for the view that the text is a product of the ancient Silk Road traversed by many cultures, which leads through the Tarim Basin.

The huge chain of mountains which surround the plateau in almost a circle also concord with the geography of *Shambhala*.

Typically, the mythical map of Shambhala, of which there are numerous reproductions, resembles a mandala. It has the form of a wheel with eight spokes, or rather it corresponds to a lotus with eight petals. Each of the petals forms an administrative region. There a governor rules as the highest official. He is the viceroy of not less than 120 million villages which can be found on each "lotus petal". *Shambhala* thus possesses a total of 960 million settlements. The whole land is surrounded by a ring of barely scaleable snowcapped mountains.

In the center of the ring of mountains lies the country's capital, Kalapa by name. By night, the city of light is lit up as bright as day, so that the moon can no longer be seen. There the *Shambhala* king lives in a palace made from every conceivable gem and diamond. The architecture is based upon the laws of the heavens. There is a sun temple and a moon temple, a replica of the zodiac and the astral orbits. A little to the south of the palace the visitor finds a wonderful park. In it *Suchandra* ordered the temple of *Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata* to be built. It is made from five valuable materials: gold, silver, turquoise, coral, and pearl. Its ground plan corresponds to the *Kalachakra* sand mandala.

### **The kings and administration of Shambhala**

All the kings of *Shambhala* belong to an inherited dynasty. Since the historical Buddha initiated the first regent, Suchandra, into the Time Tantra there have been two royal houses which have determined the fate of the country. The first seven kings called themselves *Dharmaraja* (kings of law). They were originally descended from the same lineage which produced Buddha Shakyamuni, the Shakyas. The following 25 kings of the second dynasty are the "Kulikas" or "Kalkis". Each of these rulers reigns for exactly 100 years. The future regents are also already laid down by name. The texts are not always unanimous about who is presently ruling the realm. Most frequently, King Aniruddha is named, who is said to have taken the reins of power in 1927 and shall set them aside again in the year 2027. A great spectacle awaits the world when the 25th scion of the Kalki dynasty takes office. This is *Rudra Chakrin*, the wrathful wheel turner. In the year 2327 he will ascend the throne. We shall come to deal with him in detail.

Like the Indian *Maha Siddhas*, the Kalkis have long hair which they tie up in a knot. Likewise, they also adorn themselves with earrings and armbands. "The Kalki has excellent ministers, generals, and a great many queens. He has a bodyguard, elephants and elephant trainers, horses, chariots, and palanquins. His own wealth and the wealth of his subjects, the power of his magic spells, the nagas, demons, and goblins that serve him, the wealth offered to him by the centaurs and the quality of his food are all such that even the lord of the gods cannot compete with him. ... The

Kalki does not have more than one or two heirs, but he has many daughters who are given as *vajra* ladies during the initiations held on the full moon of *Caitra* each year” (Newman, 1985, p. 57). It thus appears they serve as *mudras* in the *Kalachakra* rituals.

The ruler of *Shambhala* is an absolute monarch and has at his disposal the entire worldly and spiritual power of the country. He stands at the apex of a “hierarchical pyramid” and the foundations of his Buddhocracy is composed of an army of millions of viceroys, governors, and officers who carry out the decrees of the regent.

As spiritual ruler, he is the representative of the ADI BUDDHA, as “worldly” potentate a *Chakravartin*. He is seated upon a golden throne, supported by eight sculptured lions. In his hands he holds a jewel which grants him every wish and a magic mirror, in which he can observe and control everything in his realm and on earth. Nothing escapes his watchful eye. He has the ability and the right to look into the deepest recesses of the souls of his subjects, indeed of anybody.

The roles of the sexes in the realm of Shambhala are typical. It is exclusively men who exercise political power in the androcentric state. Of the women we hear only something of their role as queen mother, the bearer of the heir to the throne, and as “wisdom consorts”. In the “tantric economy” of the state budget they form a reservoir of vital resources, since they supply the “*gynergy*” which is transformed by the official sexual magic rites into political power. Alone the sovereign has a million (!) girls, “young as the eight-day moon”, who are available to be his partners.

The highest elite of the country is formed by the tantric clergy. The monks wear white, speak Sanskrit, and are all initiated into the mysteries of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. The majority of them are considered enlightened. Then come the warriors. The king is at the same time the supreme commander of a disciplined and extremely potent army with generals at its head, a powerful officer corps and obedient “lower ranks”. The most effective and “modern” weapons of destruction are stored in the extensive arsenals of *Shambhala*. Yet — as we shall later see — the army will only mobilize completely in three hundred years time (2327 C.E.).

The totalitarian power of the Shambhala king extends over not just the inhabitants of his country, but likewise over all the people of our planet, “earth”. The French *Kalachakra* enthusiast, Jean Rivi re, describes the comprehensive competencies of the Buddhist despots as follows: “As master of the universe, emperor of the world, spiritual regent over the powerful subtle energy flows which regulate the cosmic order just as [they do] the lives of the people, the Kulika [king] of

*Shambhala* directs the spiritual development of the human masses who were born into the heavy and blind material [universe]" (Rivière, 1985, p. 36). [1]

### *The "sun chariot" of the Rishis*

Although all its rulers are known by name, the *Shambhala* realm has no history in the real sense. Hence in the many centuries of its existence hardly anything worthy of being recorded in a chronicle has happened. Consider in contrast the history-laden chain of events in the life of Buddha Shakyamuni and the numerous legends which he left behind him! But there is an event which shows that this country was not entirely free of historical conflict. This concerns the protest of a group of no less than 35 million (!) *Rishis* (seers) led by the sage Suryaratha ("sun chariot").

As the first Kulika king, Manjushrikirti, preached the *Kalachakra Tantra* to his subjects, Suryaratha distanced himself from it, and his followers, the Rishis, joined him. They preferred to choose banishment from Shambhala than to follow the "diamond path" (*Vajrayana*). Nonetheless, after they had set out in the direction of India and had already crossed the border of the kingdom, Manjushrikirti sank in to a deep meditation, stunned the emigrants by magic and ordered demon birds to bring them back.

This event probably concerns a confrontation between two religious schools. The Rishis worshipped only the sun. For this reason they also called their guru the "sun chariot" (*suryaratha*). But the Kulika king had as *Kalachakra* master and cosmic androgyne united both heavenly orbs in himself. He was the master of sun *and* moon. His demand of the Rishis that they adopt the teachings of the *Kalachakra Tantra* was also enacted on a night of the full moon. Manjushrikirti ended his sermon with the words: "If you wish to enter that path, stay here, but if you do not, then leave and go elsewhere; otherwise the doctrines of the barbarians will come to spread even in Shambhala." (Bernbaum, 1980, p. 234).

The Rishis decided upon the latter. "Since we all want to remain true to the sun chariot, we also do not wish to give up our religion and to join another", they rejoined (Grünwedel, 1915, p. 77). This resulted in the exodus already outlined. But in fetching them back Manjushrikirti had proved his magical superiority and demonstrated that the "path of the sun and moon" is stronger than the "pure sun way". The Rishis thus brought him many gold tributes and submitted to his power and the primacy of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. In the fifteenth night of the moon enlightenment was bestowed upon them.

Behind this unique historical *Shambhala* incident hides a barely noticed power-political motif. The seers (the *Rishis*) were as their name betrays clearly Brahmans; they were members of the elite priestly caste. In contrast, as priest-king Manjushrikirti integrated in his office the energies of both

the priestly and the military elite. Within himself he united *worldly* and *spiritual* power, which — as we have already discussed above — are allotted separately to the sun (high priest) and the moon (warrior king) in the Indian cultural sphere. The union of both heavenly orbs in his person made him an absolute ruler.

Because of the *Shambhala* realm's military plans for the future, which we will describe a little later, the king and his successors are extremely interested in strengthening the standing army. Then *Shambhala* will need an army of millions for the battles which are in store for it, and centuries count for nothing in this mythic realm. It was thus in Manjushrikirti's interest to abolish all caste distinctions in an overarching militarily oriented Buddhocracy. The historical Buddha is already supposed to have prophesied that the future *Shambhala* king, "... possessing the *Vajra* family, will become Kalki by making the four castes into a single clan, within the *Vajra* family, not making them into a Brahman family" (Newman, 1985, p. 64). The "*Vajra* family" mentioned is clearly contrasted to the priestly caste in this statement by Shakyamuni. Within the various Buddha families as well it represents the one who is responsible for military matters. Even today in the West, high-ranking Tibetan lamas boast that they will be reborn as generals (!) in the *Shambhala* army, that is, that they think to transform their spiritual office into a military one.

The warlike intention behind this ironing out of caste distinctions becomes more obvious in Manjushrikirti's justification that the land, should it not follow *Vajrayana* Buddhism, would inevitably fall into the hands of the "barbarians". These — as we shall later show — were the followers of Islam, against whom an enormous *Shambhala* military was being armed.

### *The journey to Shambhala*

The travel reports written by *Shambhala* seekers are mostly kept so that we do not know whether they concern actual experiences, dreams, imaginings, phantasmagoria or initiatory progress. There is also no effort to keep these distinctions clear. A *Shambhala* journey simply embodies all of these together. Thus the difficult and hazardous adventures people have undertaken in search of the legendary country correspond to the "various mystical practices along the way, that lead to the realization of tantric meditation in the kingdom itself. ... The snow mountains surrounding *Shambhala* represent worldly virtues, while the King in the center symbolizes the pure mind at the end of the journey" (Bernbaum, 1980, p. 229).

In such interpretations, then, the journeys take place in the spirit. Then again, this is not the impression gained by leafing through the *Shambha la'i lam yig*, the famous travel report of the Third Panchen Lama (1738–1780). This concerns a fantastic collection, which is obviously convinced of the reality of its factual material, of historical and geographic particulars from central Asia which describe the way to *Shambhala*.

The landscapes which, according to this “classic travel guide”, a visitor must pass through before entering the wonderland, and the dangerous adventures which must be undergone, make the journey to Shambhala (whether real or imaginary) a tantric initiatory way. This becomes particularly clear in the central confrontation with the feminine which just like the *Vajrayana* controls the whole travel route. The quite picturesque book describes over many pages encounters with all the female figures whom we already know from the tantric milieu. With literary leisure the author paints the sweetest and the most terrible scenes: pig-headed goddesses; witches mounted upon boars; dakinis swinging skull bowls filled with blood, entrails, eyes and human hearts; girls as beautiful as lotus flowers with breasts that drip nectar; harpies; five hundred demonesses with copper-red lips; snake goddesses who like nixes try to pull one into the water; the one-eyed *Ekajati*; poison mixers; sirens; naked virgins with golden bodies; female cannibals; giantesses; sweet *Asura* girls with horse’s heads; the demoness of doubt; the devil of frenzy; healers who give refreshing herbs — they all await the brave soul who sets out to seek the wonderland.

Every encounter with these female creatures must be mastered. For every group the Panchen Lama has a deterrent, appeasing, or receptive ritual ready. Some of the women must be turned away without fail by the traveler, others should be honored and acknowledged, with yet others he must unite in tantric love. But woe betide him if he should lose his emotional and seminal control here! Then he would become the victim of all these “beasts” regardless of whether they appear beautiful or dreadful. Only a complete tantra expert can pursue his way through this jungle of feminine bodies.

Thus the spheres alternate between the external and the internal, reality and imagination, the world king in the hearts of individual people and the real world ruler in the Gobi Desert, *Shambhala* as everyday life and *Shambhala* as a fairytale dream, and everything becomes possible. When on his travels through Inner Asia the Russian painter, Nicholas Roerich, showed some nomads photographs of New York they cried out: “This is the land of Shambhala!” (Roerich, 1988, p. 274).

### **The “raging wheel turner”: The martial ideology of Shambhala**

In the year 2327 (C.E.) — the prophecies of the *Kalachakra Tantra* tell us — the 25th Kalki will ascend the throne of *Shambhala*. He goes by the name of *Rudra Chakrin*, the “wrathful wheel turner” or the “Fury with the wheel”. The mission of this ruler is to destroy the “enemies of the Buddhist teaching” in a huge eschatological battle and to found a golden age. This militant hope for the future still today occupies the minds of many Tibetans and Mongolians and is beginning to spread across the whole world. We shall consider the fascination which the archetype of the “*Shambhala* warrior” exercises over western Buddhists in more detail later.



***Rudra Chakrin – the militant messiah of Shambhala***

The *Shambhala* state draws a clear and definite distinction between friend and enemy. The original idea of Buddhist pacifism is completely foreign to it. Hence the *Rudra Chakrin* carries a martial symbolic object as his insignia of dominion, the “wheel of iron” (!). We may recall that in the Buddhist world view our entire universe (*Chakravala*) is enclosed within a ring of iron mountains. We have interpreted this image as a reminder of the “doomsday iron age” of the prophecies of antiquity.

Mounted upon his white horse, with a spear in his hand, the *Rudra Chakrin* shall lead his powerful army in the 24th century. “The Lord of the Gods”, it is said of him in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, “joined with the twelve lords shall go to destroy the barbarians” (Newman, 1987, p. 645). His army shall consist of “exceptionally wild warriors” equipped with “sharp weapons”. A hundred thousand war elephants and millions of mountain horses, faster than the wind, shall serve his soldiers as mounts. Indian gods will then join the total of twelve divisions of the “wrathful wheel turner” and support their “friend” from Shambhala. This support for the warlike *Shambhala* king is probably due to his predecessor, Manjushrikirti, who succeeded in integrating the 120 million Hindu Rishis into the tantric religious system (Banerjee, 1985, p. xiii).

If, as legend has it, the author of the *Kalachakra Tantra* was the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni, in person, then he must have forgotten his whole vision and message of peace and had a truly

great fascination for the military hardware. Then weaponry plays a prominent role in the Time Tantra. Here too, by “weapon” is understood every means of implementing the physical killing of humans. It is also said of Buddha’s martial successor, the coming *Rudra Chakrin*, that, “with the *sella* (a deadly weapon) in the hand ... he shall proclaim the *Kalachakra* on earth for the liberation of beings” (Banerjee, 1959, p. 213).

### Lethal war machines

The graphic description of the war machines to which the *Kalachakra* deity devotes a number of pages already in the first chapter of the tantra is downright impressive and astonishing (Newman, 1987, pp. 553-570, verses 135-145; Grönbold, 1996). A total of seven exceptionally destructive arts of weapon are introduced. All take the form of a wheel. The text refers to them as *yantras*. There is a “wind machine” which is primarily put into action against mountain forts. They float over the enemy army and let burning oil run out all over them. The same happens to the houses and palaces of the opponent. The second art of weapon is described as a “sword in the ground machine”. This acts as a personal protection for the “wrathful wheel turner”. Anyone who enters his palace without permission and steps upon the machine hidden beneath the floor is inevitably cut to pieces. As the third art follows the “harpoon machine”, a kind of ancient machine gun. At the squeeze of a finger, “many straight arrows or sharp Harpoons hat pierce and pass through the body of an armored elephant” (Newman, 1987, p. 506).

We are acquainted with three further extremely effective “rotating weapons” which shear everything away, above all the heads of the enemy troops. One of them is compared to the wheels of the sun chariot. This is probably a variant of the solar discus which the Indian god *Vishnu* successfully put to use against the demon hordes. Such death wheels have played a significant role in Tibet’s magic military history right up into this century. We shall return to this topic at a later point. These days, believers in the *Shambhala myth* see “aircraft” or “UFOs” in them which are armed with atomic bombs and are guided by the world king’s extraterrestrial support troops.

In light of the numerous murderous instruments which are listed in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, a moral problem obviously arose for some “orthodox” Buddhists which led to the wheel weapons being understood purely symbolically. They concerned radical methods of destroying one’s own human ego. The great scholar and *Kalachakra* commentator, Khas Grub je, expressly opposes this pious attempt. In his opinion, the machines “are to be taken literally” (Newman, 1987, p. 561).

### The “final battle”

Let us return to the *Rudra Chakrin*, the tantric apocalyptic redeemer. He appears in a period, in which the Buddhist teaching is largely eradicated. According to the prophecies, it is the epoch of

the “not-Dharmas”, against whom he makes a stand. Before the final battle against the enemies of Buddhism can take place the state of the world has worsened dramatically. The planet is awash with natural disasters, famine, epidemics, and war. People become ever more materialistic and egoistic. True piety vanishes. Morals become depraved. Power and wealth are the sole idols. A parallel to the Hindu doctrine of the *Kali yuga* is obvious here.

In these bad times, a despotic “barbarian king” forces all nations other than *Shambhala* to follow his rule, so that at the end only two great forces remain: firstly the depraved “king of the barbarians” supported by the “lord of all demons”, and secondly *Rudra Chakrin*, the wrathful Buddhist messiah. At the outset, the barbarian ruler subjugates the whole world apart from the mythical kingdom of Shambhala. Its existence is an incredible goad to him and his subjects: “Their jealousy will surpass all limits, crashing up like waves of the sea. Incensed that there could be such a land outside their control, they will gather an army together and set out to conquer it.” (Bernbaum, 1980, p. 240). It then comes, says the prophecy, to a brutal confrontation. [2]

Alongside the descriptions from the *Kalachakra Tantra* there are numerous other literary depictions of this Buddhist apocalyptic battle to be found. They all fail to keep secret their pleasure at war and the triumph over the corpses of the enemy. Here is a passage from the Russian painter and *Shambhala* believer, Nicholas Roerich, who became well known in the thirties as the founder of a worldwide peace organization (“Banner of Peace”). “Hard is the fate of the enemies of Shambhala. A just wrath colors the purple blue clouds. The warriors of the *Rigden-jyepo* [the Tibetan name for the *Rudra Chakrin*], in splendid armor with swords and spears are pursuing their terrified enemies. Many of them are already prostrated and their firearms, big hats and all their possessions are scattered over the battlefield. Some of them are dying, destroyed by the just hand. Their leader is already smitten and lies spread under the steed of the great warrior, the blessed *Rigden*. Behind the Ruler, on chariots, follow fearful cannons, which no walls can withstand. Some of the enemy, kneeling, beg for mercy, or attempt to escape their fate on the backs of elephants. But the sword of justice overtake defamers. The Dark must be annihilated.” (Roerich, 1985, p. 232) The “Dark”, that is those of different faiths, the opponents of Buddhism and hence of Shambhala. They are all cut down without mercy during the “final battle”. In this enthused sweep of destruction the Buddhist warriors completely forget the Bodhisattva vow which preaches compassion with all beings.

The skirmishes of the battle of the last days (in the year 2327) are, according to commentaries upon the *Kalachakra Tantra*, supposed to reach through Iran into eastern Turkey (Bernbaum, 1982, p. 251). The regions of the *Kalachakra Tantra*’s origin are also often referred to as the site of the coming eschatological battlefield (the countries of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan). This has a certain historical justification, since the southern “Islamic” flank of the former Soviet Union counts as one of the most explosive crisis regions of the present day (see in this regard the *Spiegel*, 20/1998, pp. 160-161).

The conquest of Kailash, the holy mountain, is nominated as a further strategic goal in the Shambhala battle. After the *Rudra Chakrin* has “killed [his enemies] in battle waged across the whole world, at the end of the age the world ruler will with his own fourfold army come into the city which was built by the gods on the mountain of Kailash” (Banerjee, 1959, p. 215). In general, “wherever the [Buddhist] religion has been destroyed and the *Kali* age is on the rise, there he will go” (Banerjee, 1959, p. 52). [3]

### Buddha versus Allah

The armies of *Rudra Chakrin* will destroy the “not-Dharma” and the doctrines of the “unreligious barbarian hordes”. Hereby, according to the original text of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, it is above all the *Koran* which is intended. Mohammed himself is referred to by name several times in the Time Tantra, as is his one god, *Allah*. We learn of the barbarians that they are called *Mleccha*, which means the “inhabitants of Mecca” (Petri, 1966, p. 107). These days *Rudra Chakrin* is already celebrated as the “killer of the *Mlecchas*” (Banerjee, 1959, p. 52). This fixation of the highest tantra on Islam is only all too readily understandable, then the followers of Mohammed had in the course of history not just wrought terrible havoc among the Buddhist monasteries and communities of India — the Islamic doctrine must also have appeared more attractive and feeling to many of the ordinary populace than the complexities of a Buddhism represented by an elitist community of monks. There were many “traitors” in central Asia who gladly and readily reached for the *Koran*. Such conversions among the populace must have eaten more deeply into the hearts of the Buddhist monks than the direct consequences of war. Then the *Kalachakra Tantra*, composed in the time where the hordes of Muslims raged in the Punjab and along the Silk Road, is marked by an irreconcilable hate for the “subhumans” from Mecca.

This dualist division of the world between Buddhism on the one side and Islam on the other is a dogma which the Tibetan lamas seek to transfer to the future of the whole of human history. “According to certain conjectures”, writes a western commentator upon the *Shambhala myth*, “two superpowers will then have control over the world and take to the field against one another. The Tibetans foresee a Third World War here” (Henss, 1985, p. 19).

In the historical part of our analysis we shall come to speak of this dangerous antinomy once more. In contrast to Mohammed, the other “false doctrines” likewise mentioned in the first chapter of the *Kalachakra Tantra* as needing to be combated by the *Shambhala* king appear pale and insignificant. It nevertheless makes sense to introduce them, so as to demonstrate which founders of religions the tantric blanket conception of enemy stretched to encompass. The *Kalachakra* nominates Enoch, Abraham and Moses among the Jews, then Jesus for the Christians, and a “white clothed one”, who is generally accepted to be Mani, the founder the Manichaeism. It is most surprising that in a further passage the “false doctrines” of these religious founders are

played down and even integrated into the tantra's own system. After they have had to let a strong attack descend upon them as "heresies" in the first chapter, in the second they form the various facets of a crystal, and the yogi is instructed not to disparage them (Grönbold, 1992a, p. 295).

Such inconsistencies are — as we have already often experienced — added to tantric philosophy by itself. The second chapter of the *Kalachakra Tantra* thus does not switch over to a western seeming demand for freedom of religion and opinion, on the contrary apparent tolerance and thinking in terms of "the enemy" are both retained alongside one another and are, depending on the situation, rolled out to serve its own power interest. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama is — as we shall show in detail — an ingenious interpreter of this double play. Outwardly he espouses religious freedom and ecumenical peace. But in contrast, in the ritual system he concentrates upon the aggressive Time Tantra, in which the scenario is dominated by destructive fantasies, dreams of omnipotence, wishes for conquest, outbreaks of wrath, pyromaniacal obsessions, mercilessness, hate, killing frenzies, and apocalypses. That such despotic images also determine the "internal affairs" of the exiled Tibetans for the Tibetan "god-king", is something upon which we shall report in the second part of our study.

After winning the final battle, the *Kalachakra Tantra* prophecies, the *Rudra Chakrin* founds the "golden age". A purely Buddhist paradise is established on earth. Joy and wealth will abound. There is no more war. Everybody possesses great magical powers, Science and technology flourish. People live to be 1800 years old and have no need to fear death, since they will be reborn into an even more beautiful Eden. This blissful state prevails for around 20,000 years. The *Kalachakra Tantra* has by then spread to every corner of the globe and become the one "true" world religion. (But afterwards, the old cycle with its wars of destruction, defeats and victories begins anew.)

### The non-Buddhist origins of the Shambhala myth

Apocalyptic visions, final battles between Good and Evil, saviors with lethal weapons in their hands are absolutely no topic for *Hinayana* Buddhism. They first emerge in the *Mahayana* period (200 B.C.E.), are then incorporated by *Vajrayana* (400 C.E.) and gain their final and central form in the *Kalachakra Tantra* (tenth century C.E.). Hence, as in the case of the ADI BUDDHA, the question arises as to where the non-Buddhist influences upon the *Shambhala myth* are to be sought.

Yet before we come to that, we ought to consider the widespread *Maitreya* prophecy, which collides with the *Shambhala* vision and the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Already in the Gandhara era (200 B.C.E.), *Maitreya* is known as the future Buddha who shall be incarnated on earth. He is still dwelling in the so-called *Tushita* heaven and awaits his mission. Images of him strike the observer

at once because unlike other depictions of Buddha he is not resting in the lotus posture, but rather sits in a “European” style, as if on a chair. In his case too, the world first goes into decline before he appears to come to the aid of the suffering humanity. His epiphany is, however, according to most reports much more healing and peaceable than those of the “wrathful wheel turner”. But there are also other more aggressive prophecies from the seventh century where he first comes to earth as a messiah following an apocalyptic final battle (Sponberg, 1988, p. 31). For the Russian painter and *Shambhala* seeker, Nicholas Roerich, there is in the end no difference between *Maitreya* and *Rudra Chakrin* any more, they are simply two names for the same redeemer.

Without doubt the *Kalachakra Tantra* is primarily dominated by conceptions which can also be found in Hinduism. This is especially true of the yoga techniques, but likewise applies to the cosmology and the cyclical destruction and renewal of the universe. In Hindu prophecies too, the god *Vishnu* appears as savior at the end of the *Kali yuga*, also, incidentally, upon a white horse like the Buddhist *Rudra Chakrin*, in order to exterminate the enemies of the religion. He even bears the dynastic name of the *Shambhala* kings and is known as *Kalki*.

Among the academic researchers there is nonetheless the widespread opinion that the savior motif, be it *Vishnu* or *Buddha Maitreya* or even the *Rudra Chakrin*, is of Iranian origin. The stark distinction between the forces of the light and the dark, the apocalyptic scenario, the battle images, the idea of a militant world ruler, even the mandala model of the five meditation Buddhas were unknown among the original Buddhist communities. Buddhism, alone among all the salvational religions, saw no savior behind Gautama’s experience of enlightenment. But for Iran these motifs of salvation were (and still are today) central.

In a convincing study, the orientalist, Heinrich von Stietencron, has shown how — since the first century C.E. at the latest — Iranian sun priests infiltrated into India and merged their concepts with the local religions, especially Buddhism. (Stietencron, 1965. p. 170). They were known as *Maga* and *Bhojaka*. The *Magas*, from whom our word “magician” is derived, brought with them among other things the cult of Mithras and combined it with elements of Hindu sun worship. Western researchers presume that the name of *Maitreya*, the future Buddha, derives from *Mithras*.

The *Bhojakas*, who followed centuries later (600–700 C.E.), believed that they emanated from the body of their sun god. They also proclaimed themselves to be the descendants of Zarathustra. In India they created a mixed solar religion from the doctrines of the *Avesta* (the teachings of Zarathustra) and *Mahayana* Buddhism. From the Buddhists they adopted fasting and the prohibitions on cultivating fields and trade. In return, they influenced Buddhism primarily with their visions of light. Their “photisms” are said to have especially helped shape the shining figure of the

Buddha *Amitabha*. Since they placed the time god, *Zurvan*, at the center of their cult, it could also be they who anticipated the essential doctrines of the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

Like the *Kalachakra* deity we have described, the Iranian *Zurvan* carries the entire universe in his mystic body: the sun, moon, and stars. The various divisions of time such as hours, days, and months dwell in him as personified beings. He is the ruler of eternal and of historical time. White light and the colors of the rainbow burst out of him. His worshippers pray to him as “father-mother”. Sometimes he is portrayed as having four heads like the Buddhist time god. He governs as the “father of fire” or as the “victory fire”. Through him, fire and time are equated. He is also cyclical time, in which the world is swallowed by flames so as to arise anew.

Manichaeism (from the third century on) also took on numerous elements from the *Zurvan* religion and mixed them with Christian/Gnostic ideas and added Buddhist concepts. The founder of the religion, Mani, undertook a successful missionary journey to India. Key orientalist assume that his teachings also had a reverse influence upon Buddhism. Among other aspects, they mention the fivefold group of meditation Buddhas, the dualisms of good and evil, light and darkness, the holy man’s body as the world in microcosm, and the concept of salvation. More specific are the white robes which the monks in the kingdom of *Shambhala* wear. White was the cult color of the Manichaean priestly caste and is not a normal color for clothing in Buddhism. But the blatant eroticism which the *Kalachakra* translator and researcher in Asia, Albert Grünwedel, saw in Manichaeism was not there. In contrast; Mani’s religion exhibits extremely “puritanical” traits and rejects everything sexual: “The sin of sex”, he is reported to have said, “is animal, an imitation of the devil mating. Above all it produces every propagation and continuation of the original evil” (quoted by Hermanns, 1965, p. 105).

While the famous Italian Tibetologist, Guiseppe Tucci, believes Iranian influences can be detected in the doctrine of ADI BUDDHA, he sees the Lamaist-Tibetan way in total rather as gnostic, since it attempts to overcome the dualism of good and evil and does not peddle the out and out moralizing of the *Avesta* or the Manichaeans. This is certainly true for the yoga way in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, yet it is not so for the eschatology of the *Shambhala myth*. There, the “prince of light” (*Rudra Chakrin*) and the depraved “prince of darkness” take to the field against one another.

There was a direct Iranian influence upon the Bon cult, the state religion which preceded Buddhism in Tibet. Bon, often erroneously confused with the old shamanist cultures of the highlands, is a explicit religion of light with an organized priesthood, a savior (*Shen rab*) and a realm of paradise (*Olmolungring*) which resembles the kingdom of *Shambhala* in an astonishing manner.

It is a Tradition in Europe to hypothesize ancient Egyptian influences upon the tantric culture of Tibet. This can probably be traced to the occult writings of the Jesuit, Athanasius Kirchner (1602-1680), who believed he had discovered the cradle of all advanced civilizations including that of the Tibetans in the Land of the Nile. The Briton, Captain S. Turner, who visited the highlands in the year 1783, was likewise convinced of a continuity between ancient Egypt and Tibet. Even this century, Siegbert Hummel saw the “Land of Snows” as almost a “reserve for Mediterranean traditions” and likewise nominated Egypt as the origin of the tradition of the Tibetan mysteries (Hummel, 1954, p. 129; 1962, p. 31). But it was especially the occultist Helena Blavatsky who saw the origins of both cultures as flowing from the same source. The two “supernatural secret societies”, who whispered the ideas to her were the “Brotherhood of Luxor” and the “Tibetan Brotherhood”.

The determining Greek influence upon the sacred art of Buddhism (Gandhara style) became a global event which left its traces as far afield as Japan. Likewise, the effect of Hellenistic ideas upon the development of Buddhist doctrines is well vouched for. There is widespread unanimity that without this encounter *Mahayana* would have never even been possible. According to the studies of the ethnologist Mario Bussagli, hermetic and alchemic teachings are also supposed to have come into contact with the world view of Buddha via Hellenistic Baktria (modern Afghanistan) and the Kusha empire which followed it, the rulers of which were of Scythian origin but had adopted Greek language and culture (Bussagli, 1985).

### Evaluation of the Shambhala myth

The ancient origins and contents of the *Shambhala* state make it, when seen from the point of view of a western political scientist, an antidemocratic, totalitarian, doctrinaire and patriarchal model. It concerns a repressive ideal construction which is to be imposed upon all of humanity in the wake of an “ultimate war”. Here the sovereign (the *Shambhala* king) and in no sense the people decide the legal norms. He governs as the absolute monarch of a planetary Buddhocracy. King and state even form a mystic unity, in a literal, not a figurative sense, then the inner bodily energy processes of the ruler are identical with external state happenings. The various administrative levels of Shambhala (viceroys, governors, and officials) are thus considered to be the extended limbs of the sovereign.

Further to this, the *Shambhala* state (in contrast to the original teachings of the Buddha) is based upon the clear differentiation of friend and enemy. Its political thought is profoundly dualist, up to and including the moral sphere. Islam is regarded as the arch-enemy of the country. In resolving aggravated conflicts, *Shambhala* society has recourse to a “high-tech” and extremely violent military machinery and employs the sociopolitical utopia of “paradise on earth” as its central item of propaganda.

It follows from all these features that the current, Fourteenth Dalai Lama's constant professions of faith in the fundamentals of western democracy remain empty phrases for as long as he continues to place the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala myth* at the center of his ritual existence. The objection commonly produced by lamas and western Buddhists, that *Shambhala* concerns a metaphysical and not a worldly institution, does not hold water. We know, namely, from history that both traditional Tibetan and Mongolian society cultivated the *Shambhala myth* without at any stage drawing a distinction between a worldly and a metaphysical aspect in this matter. In both countries, everything which the Buddhocratic head of state decided was holy *per se*.

The argument that the *Shambhala* vision was distant "pie in the sky" is also not convincing. The aggressive warrior myth and the idea of a world controlling ADI BUDDHA has influenced the history of Tibet and Mongolia for centuries as a rigid political program which is oriented to the decisions of the clerical power elite. In the second part of our study we present this program and its historical execution to the reader. We shall return to the topic that in the view of some lamas the Tibetan state represents an earthly copy of the *Shambhala* realm and the Dalai Lama an emanation of the *Shambhala* king.

### **"Inner" and "outer" Shambhala**

In answer to the question as to why the "world ruler on the Lion Throne" (the *Shambhala* king) does not peacefully and positively intervene in the fate of humanity, the French *Kalachakra* believer, Jean Rivi re, replied: "He does not inspire world politics and does not intervene directly or humanly in the conflicts of the reborn beings. His role is spiritual, completely inner, individual one could say" (Rivi re, 1985, p. 36).

Such an "internalization" or "psychologization" of the myth is applied by some authors to the entire Buddhocratic realm, including the history of Shambhala and the final battle prophesied there. The country, with all its viceroys, ministers, generals, officials, warriors, ladies of the court, *vajra* girls, palace grounds, administrative bodies and dogmata, now appears as a structural model which describes the mystic body of a yogi: "If you can use your body properly, than the body becomes Shambhala, the ninety-six principalities concur in all their actions, and you conquer the kingdom itself." (Bernbaum, 1980, p. 155)

The arduous "journey to Shambhala" and the "final battle" are also subjectified and identified as, respectively, an "initiatory path" or an "inner battle of the soul" along the way to enlightenment. In this psycho-mystic drama, the ruler of the last days, *Rudra Chakrin*, plays the "higher self" or the

“divine consciousness” of the yogi, which declares war on the human ego in the figure of the “barbarian king” and exterminates it. The prophesied paradise refers to the enlightenment of the initiand.

We have already a number of times gone into the above all among western Buddhists widespread habit of exclusively internalizing or “psychologizing” tantric images and myths. From an “occidental” way of looking at things, an internalization implies that an external image (a war for example) is to be understood as a symbol for an inner psychic/spiritual process (for example, a “psychological” war). However, according to Eastern, magic-oriented thinking, the “identity” of interior and exterior means something different, namely that the inner processes in the yogi’s mystic body correspond to external events, or to tone this down a little, that inside *and* outside consist of the same substance (of “pure spirit” for example). The external is thus not a metaphor for the internal as in the western symbolic conception, but rather both, inner and exterior, correspond to one another. Admittedly this implies that the external can be influenced by inner manipulations, but not that it thereby disappears. Applying this concept to the example mentioned above results in the following simple statement: the *Shambhala* war takes place internally *and* externally. Just as the mystic body (interior) of the ADI BUDDHA is identical with the whole cosmos (exterior), so the mystic body (interior) of the *Shambhala* king is identical to his state (exterior).

The *Shambhala myth* and the ideologies derived from it stand in stark opposition to Gautama Buddha’s original vision of peace and to the *Ahimsa* politics (politics of nonviolence) of Mahatma Gandhi, to whom the current Dalai Lama so often refers. For Westerners sensitized by the pacifist message of Buddhism, the “internalization” of the myth may thus offer an way around the militant ambient of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. But in Tibetan/Mongolian history the prophecy of *Shambhala* has been taken literally for centuries, and — as we still have to demonstrate — has led to extremely aggressive political undertakings. It carries within it — and this is something to we shall return to discuss in detail — the seeds of a worldwide fundamentalist ideology of war.

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### Footnotes:

[1] In the thirties, Jean Marquès Rivière worked on the journal *Voile d’Isis*, in which the occult elite of Europe published. The editor was René Guénon. During this period Rivière performed a tantric ritual (“with blood and alcohol”), which left him possessed by a Tibetan deity. Only through the intervention of a Catholic exorcist could he be freed of the possession. In gratitude he reconverted to Christianity. But several years later he was once again to be found in the Buddhist camp (Robin, 1986, p. 325).

[2] In another version of the prophecy the barbarians at first succeed in penetrating into the wonderland and storming the palace of the king. *Rudra Chakrin* then extends the

offer of ruling *Shambhala* together with his opponents. The barbarian king apparently consents, but then tries to seize control alone with an attempted assassination. But the attempt fails, and the *Shambhala* king escapes. Only now does the bloody final battle of Good versus Evil occur.

[3] The scenario of the *Shambhala* wars cannot be easily brought into accord with the total downfall of the world instigated by the tantra master which we have described above. *Rudra Chakrin* is a commander who conducts his battles here on earth and extends these to at best the other 11 continents of the Buddhist model of the world. His opponents are above all the followers of Allah. As global as his mission may be, it is still realized within the framework of the existing cosmos. In other textual passages the coming *Shambhala* king is also compared with the ADI BUDDHA, who at the close of the *Kali* yuga lays waste to the entire universe and lets loose a war of the stars. It is, however, not the aim of this study to explicate such contradictions.

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## 11. THE MANIPULATOR OF EROTIC LOVE

In this chapter we want to introduce the reader to a spectacular European parallel to the fundamental tantric idea that erotic love and sexuality can be translated into material and spiritual power. It concerns several until now rarely considered theses of Giordano Bruno (1548-1600).

At the age of fifteen, Bruno, born in Nola, Italy, joined the Dominican order. However, his interest in the newest scientific discoveries and his fascination with the late Hellenistic esotericism very soon led him to leave his order, a for the times most courageous undertaking. From this point on he began a hectic life on the road which took him all over Europe. Nonetheless, the restless and ingenious ex-monk wrote and published numerous “revolutionary” works in which he took a critical stance toward the dogmata of the church on all manner of topics. The fact that Bruno championed many ideas from the modern view of the world that was emerging at the time, especially the Copernican system, made him a hero of the new during his own lifetime. After he was found guilty of heresy by the Inquisition in 1600 and burned at the stake at the Campo dei Fiori in Rome, the European intelligentsia proclaimed him to be the greatest “martyr of modern science”. This image has stayed with him up until the present day. Yet this is not entirely justified, then Bruno was far more interested in the esoteric ideas of antiquity and the occultism of his day than in modern scientific research. Nearly all of his works concern magic/mystic/mythological themes.

Like the Indian Tantrics, this eccentric and dynamic Renaissance philosopher was convinced that the entire universe was held together by erotic love. Love in all its variations ruled the world, from physical nature to the metaphysical heavens, from sexuality to heartfelt love of the mystics: it “led either to the animals [*sexuality*] or to the intelligible and is then called the divine [*mysticism*” (quoted by Samsonow, 1995, p. 174).

Bruno extended the term *Eros* (erotic love) to encompass in the final instance all human emotions and described it in general terms as the primal force which bonded, or rather—as he put it—“chained”, through affect. “The most powerful shackle of all is ... love” (quoted by Samsonow, 1995, p. 224). The lover is “chained” to the individual loved. But there is no need for the reverse to apply, then the beloved does not themselves have to love. This definition of love as a “chain” made it possible for Bruno to see even hate as a way of expressing erotic love, since he or she who hates is just as “chained” to the hated by his feelings as the lover is to the beloved. (To more graphically illustrate the parallels between Bruno’s philosophy and Tantrism, we will in the following speak of the lover as feminine rather than masculine. Bruno used the term completely generically for both women and men.

According to Bruno, “the ability to enchain” is also the main characteristic of magic, then a magician behaves like an escapist when he binds his “victim” (whether human or spirit) to him with

love. "There where we have spoken of natural magic, we have described to what extent all chains can be related to the chain of love, are dependent upon the chain of love or arise in the chain of love" (quoted by Samsonow, 1995, p. 213). More than anything else, love binds people, and this gives it something of the demonic, especially when it is exploited by one partner to the disadvantage of the other. "As regards all those who are dedicated to philosophy or magic, it is fully apparent that the highest bond, the most important and the most general belongs to erotic love: and that is why the Platonists called love the Great Demon, *daemon magnus*" (quoted by Couliano, 1987, p. 91).

Now how does this erotic magic work? According to Bruno an erotic/magic involvement arises between the lovers, a fabric of affect, feelings, and moods. He refers to this as *rete* (net or fabric). It is woven from subtle "threads of affect", but is thus all the more binding. (Let us recall that the Sanskrit word "tantra" translates as "fabric" or "net".) The *rete* (the erotic net) can be expressed in a sexual relationship (through sexual dependency), but in the majority of cases it is of a psychological nature which nonetheless further strengthens its power to bind. Every form of love chains in its own way: "This love", Bruno says, "is unique, and is a fetter which makes everything one" (quoted by Samsonow, 1995, p. 180).

If they wish, a person can control the one whom they bind to themselves with love, since "through this chain [the] lover is enraptured, so that they want to be transferred to the beloved" as Bruno writes (quoted by Samsonow, 1995, p. 181). Accordingly, the real magician is the beloved, who exploits the erotic energy of the lover in the accumulation of his own power. He transforms love into power, he is a manipulator of erotic love. [1] As we shall soon see, even if Bruno's manipulator is not literally a Tantric, the second part of the definition with which we prefaced our study still seems to fit:

**The mystery of Tantric Buddhism consists in ...**

**the manipulation of erotic love**

**so as to attain universal androcentric power.**

The manipulator, also referred to as a "soul hunter" by Bruno, can reach the heart of the lover through her sense of sight, through her hearing, through her spirit, and through her imagination, and thus chain her to him. He can look at her, smile at her, hold her hand, shower her with flattering compliments, sleep with her, or influence her through his power of imagination. "In enchainment", Bruno says, "there are four movements. The first is the penetration or insertion, the second the attachment or the chain, the third the attraction, the fourth the connection, which is also known as enjoyment. ... Hence [the] lover wants to completely penetrate the beloved with his tongue, his mouth, with his eyes, etc." (Samsonow, 1995, pp. 171, 200). That is, not only does the lover let herself be enchained, she must also experience the greatest desire for this bond. This lust has to increase to the point that she wants to offer herself with her entire being to the

beloved manipulator and would like to “disappear in him”. This gives the latter absolute power over the enchained one.

The manipulator evokes all manner of illusions in the awareness of his love victim and arouses her emotions and desires. He opens the heart of the lover and can take possession of the one thus “wounded”. He is lord over foreign emotions and “has means at his disposal to forge all the chains he wants: hope, compassion, fear, love, hate, indignation, anger, joy, patience, disdain for life and death” writes Joan P. Couliano in her book, *Eros and magic in the Renaissance* (Couliano, 1987, p. 94). Yet the magically enacted enchainment may never occur against the manifest will of the enchanted one. In contrast, the manipulator must always awake the suggestion in his victim that everything is happening in her interests alone. He creates the total illusion that the lover is a chosen one, an independent individual following her own will.

Bruno also mentions an indirect method of gaining influence, in which the lover does not know at all that she is being manipulated. In this case, the manipulator makes use of “powerful invisible beings, demons and heroes”, whom he conjures up with magic incantations (*mantras*) so as to achieve the desired result with their help (Couliano, 1987, p. 88). We learn from the following quotation how these invoked spirits work for the manipulator: They need “neither ears nor a voice nor a whisper, rather they penetrate the inner senses [of the lover] as described. Thus they do not just produce dreams and cause voices to be heard and all kinds of things to be seen, but they also force certain thoughts upon the waking as the truth, which they can hardly recognize as deriving from another” (Samsonow, 1995, p. 140). The lover thus believes she is acting in her own interests and according to her own will, whilst she is in fact being steered and controlled through magic blandishments.

The manipulator himself may not surrender to any emotional inclinations. Like a tantric yogi he must keep his own feelings completely under control from start to finish. For this reason well-developed egocentricity is a necessary characteristic for a good manipulator. He is permitted only one love: narcissism (*philautia*), and according to Bruno only a tiny elite possesses the ability needed, because the majority of people surrender to uncontrolled emotions. The manipulator has to completely bridle and control his fantasy: “Be careful,” Bruno warns him, “not to change yourself from manipulator into the tool of phantasms” (quoted by Couliano, 1987, p. 92). The real European magician must, like his oriental colleague (the *Siddha*), be able “to arrange, to correct and to provide phantasy, to create the different kinds at will” (Couliano, 1987, p. 92).

He must not develop any reciprocal feelings for the lover, but he has to pretend to have these, since, as Bruno says, “the chains of love, friendship, goodwill, favor, lust, charity, compassion, desire, passion, avarice, craving, and longing disappear easily if they are not based upon mutuality. From this stems the saying: love dies without love” (quoted by Samsonow, 1995, p. 181). This statement is of thoroughly cynical intent, then the manipulator is not interested in reciprocating the erotic love of the lover, but rather in simulating such a reciprocity.

But for the deception to succeed the manipulator may not remain completely cold. He has to know from his own experience the feelings that he evokes in the lover, but he may never surrender himself to these: “He is even supposed to kindle in his phantasmic mechanism [his imagination] formidable passions, provided these be sterile and that he be detached from them. For there is no way to bewitch others than by experimenting in himself with what he wishes to produce in his victim” (Coulano, 1987, p. 102). The evocation of passions without falling prey to them is, as we know, almost a tantric *leitmotif*.

Yet the most astonishing aspect of Bruno’s manipulation thesis is that, as in *Vajrayana*, he mentions the retention of semen as a powerful instrument of control which the magician should command, since “through the expulsion of the seed the chains [of love] are loosened, through the retention tightened” (quoted by Samsonow, 1995, p. 175). In a further passage we can read: “If this [the *semen virile*] is expelled by an appropriate part, the force of the chain is reduced correspondingly (quoted by Samsonow, 1995, p. 175). Or the reverse: a person who retains their semen, can thereby strengthen the erotic bondage of the lover.

Bruno’s idea that there is a correspondence between erotic love and power is thus in accord with tantric dogma on the issue of sperm gnosis as well. His theory of the manipulability of love offers us valuable psychological insights into the soul of the lover and the beloved manipulator. They also help us to understand why women surrender themselves to the Buddhist yogis and what is played out in their emotional worlds during the rites. As we have already indicated, this topic is completely suppressed in the tantric discussion. But Bruno addresses it openly and cynically — it is the heart of the lover which is manipulated. The effect for the manipulator (or yogi) is thus all the greater the more his *karma mudra* surrenders herself to him.

Bruno’s treatise, *De vinculis in genere* [On the binding forces in general] (1591), can in terms of its cynicism and directness only be compared with Machiavelli’s *The Prince* (1513). But his work goes further. Coulano correctly points out that Macchiavelli examines political, Bruno however, psychological manipulation. Then it is less the love of a consort and rather the erotic love of the masses which should — this she claims is Bruno’s intention — serve the manipulator as a “chain”. The former monk from Nola recognized manipulated “love” as a powerful instrument of control for the seduction of the masses. His theory thus contributes much to an understanding of the ecstatic attractiveness that dictators and pontiffs exercise over the people who love them. This makes Bruno’s work up to date despite its cynical content.

Bruno’s observations on “erotic love as a chain” are essentially tantric. Like *Vajrayana*, they concern the manipulation of the erotic in order to produce spiritual and worldly power. Bruno recognized that love in the broadest sense is the “elixir of life”, which first makes possible the establishment and maintenance of institutions of power headed by a person (such as the Pope, the Dalai Lama, or a “beloved” dictator for example). As strong as love may be, it is, if it remains one-sided, manipulable in the person of the “lover”. Indeed, the stronger it becomes, the more easily it can be used or “misused” for the purposes of power (by the “beloved”).

The fact that Tantrism focuses more upon sexuality than on the more sublime forms of erotic love, does not change anything about this principle of “erotic exploitation”. The manipulation of more subtle forms of love like the look (*Carya Tantra*), the smile (*Kriya Tantra*), and the touch (*Yoga Tantra*) are also known in *Vajrayana*. Likewise, in Tantric Buddhism as in every religious institution, the “spiritual love” of its believers is a life energy without which it could not exist. In the second part of our study we shall have to demonstrate how the Tibetan leader of the Buddhists, the Dalai Lama, succeeds in binding ever more Western believers to him with the “chains of love”.

Incidentally, in her book which we have quoted (*Eros and Magic in the Renaissance*) Couliano is of the opinion that via the mass media the West has already been woven into such a manipulable “erotic net” (*rete*). At the end of her analysis of Bruno’s treatise on power she concludes: “And since the relations between individuals are controlled by ‘erotic’ criteria in the widest sense of that adjective, human society at all levels is itself only magic at work. Without even being conscious of it, all beings who, by reason of the way the world is constructed, find themselves in an intersubjective intermediate place, participate in a magic process. The manipulator is the only one who, having understood the ensemble of that mechanism, is first an observer of intersubjective relations while simultaneously gaining knowledge from which he means subsequently to profit” (Couliano, 1987, p. 103).

But Couliano fails to provide an answer to the question of who this manipulator could be. In the second part of our analysis we shall need to examine whether the Dalai Lama with his worldwide message of love, his power over the net (*rete*) of Western media, and his sexual magic techniques from the *Kalachakra Tantra*, fulfills the criteria to be a magician in Giordano Bruno’s sense.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] The Renaissance philosopher attempts to describe this transformation process in his text *De vinculis in genere* (1591)

## 12. EPILOGUE TO PART I

We have shown that Buddhism has from the very beginning considered the feminine principle to be a force which acts in opposition to its redemptive concepts. All types of women, from the mother to the lover, the wife, the hetaera, even the Buddhist nun, are seen to be more or less obstructions along the path to enlightenment. This negative evaluation of the feminine does not and never did have — as is often currently claimed — a social origin, but must rather be considered as a dogmatic and fundamental doctrine of this religion. It is an unavoidable consequence of the opening sentence of the *Four Noble Truths*, which states that all life is, per se, suffering. From this we can conclude that each and every birth brings only misery, sickness, and death, or conversely, that only the cessation of reincarnation leads to liberation. The woman, as the place of conception and childbearing, opens the gateway to incarnation, and is thus considered to be the greatest adversary to the spiritual development of the man and of humanity in total.

This implies that the deactivation, the sacrifice, and the destruction of the feminine principle is a central concern of Buddhism. The “female sacrifice” is already played out in one of the first legends from the life of Buddha, the early death of Buddha's mother *Maya*. Even her name evokes the Indian goddess of the feminine world of illusion; the death of *Maya* (illusion) simultaneously signifies the appearance of the absolute truth (*Buddha*), since *Maya* represents only relative truth.

We have shown how Shakyamuni's fundamentally misogynist attitude was set forth in the ensuing phases of Buddhism — in the meditative dismemberment of the female during a spiritual exercise in *Hinayana*; in the attempt to change the sex of the woman so that she can gain entry to the higher spiritual spheres as a male in *Mahayana*.

In *Vajrayana* the negative attitude towards the feminine tips over into an apparently positive valuation. Women, sexuality, and the erotic receive a previously unknown elevation in the tantric texts, a deification in fact. We have nonetheless been able to demonstrate that this reversal of the image of the woman is for the yogi merely a means to an end — to steal the feminine energy (*gynergy*) concentrated within her as a goddess. We have termed the sexual magic rituals through which this thieving transfer of energy is conducted the “tantric female sacrifice”, intended in its broadest sense and irrespective of whether the theft really or merely symbolically takes place, since the distinction between reality and the world of symbols is in the final instance irrelevant for a Tantric. All that is real is symbolic, and every symbol is real!

The goal of the female sacrifice and the diversion of *gynergy* is the production of a superhuman androgynous being, which combines within itself both forces, the masculine and the feminine. Buddhist Tantrics consider such a combination of sexual energies within a single individual to be

an expression of supreme power. He as a man has become a bearer of the *maha mudra*, the vessel of an “inner woman”. In the light of the material we have researched and reported, we must view our opening hypothesis, repeated here, as confirmed:

**The mystery of Tantric Buddhism consists in the sacrifice of the feminine principle  
and the manipulation of erotic love in order to obtain universal androcentric power**

Since, from the viewpoint of a tantric master, the highest (androcentric power) can only be achieved via the ritual transformation of the lowest (the real woman), he also applies this miracle of transubstantiation to other domains. Thus he employs all manner of repulsive, base substances in his rituals, and commits criminal deeds up to and including murder, in order to achieve, via the “law of inversion”, the exact opposite: joy, power, and beauty. We have, however, indicated with some force how this “familiarity with the demonic” can become a matter of course. This brings with it the danger that the Tantric is no longer able to overcome the negativity of his actions. The consequence is a fundamentally aggressive and morbid attitude, which — as we will show — forms one of the characteristics of the entire Tibetan culture.

As the *Kalachakra Tantra* includes within itself the core ideas and the methods of all other tantras, and as it represents the central ritual of the Dalai Lama, we concentrated upon an analysis of this text and offered a detailed description of the various public and secret initiations. We were able to demonstrate how the internal processes within the energy body of the yogi are aligned with external ritual procedures, and how the “female sacrifice” takes place in both spheres — externally through the “extermination” of the real woman (*karma mudra*) and internally through the extermination of the *candali* (“fire woman”).

The *Kalachakra Tantra*, too, has as its goal the “alchemical” creation of a cosmic androgyne, who is supposed to exercise total control over time, the planets, and the universe. This androgynous universal ruler (*dominus mundi*) is the ADI BUDDHA. Only after he can align his sexual magic rites and his inner physiological processes with the laws of the heavens and earth can a practicing yogi become ADI BUDDHA. He then sets sun, moon, and stars in motion with his breath, and by the same means steers the evolution of the human race. His mystic body and the cosmic body of the ADI BUDDHA form a unit, and thus his bodily politics (the motions of the internal energy flows) affects and effects world politics in every sense.

On the astral plane, the yogi unleashes a gigantic war among the stars before he becomes ADI BUDDHA, which likewise aims to sacrifice the gender polarity (represented by the sun and moon). In the final act of this apocalyptic performance, the tantric master burns up the cosmos in a murderous firestorm so as to allow a new world to emerge from the ashes of the old, a world

which is totally subject to his imagination and will. [1] Only then does the ADI BUDDHA's (or yogi's) dominion encompass the entire universe, in the form of a mandala.

In his political role (as King of the World) the ADI BUDDHA is a *Chakravartin*, a cosmic wheel turner who governs the cosmos, conceived of as a wheel. This vision of power is linked by the *Shambhala myth* in the *Kalachakra Tantra* to a political utopia, one which is aggressive and warlike, despotic and totalitarian. This Buddhocratic world kingdom is controlled by an omnipotent priest-king (the *Chakravartin*), a lord of evolution, a further emanation of the ADI BUDDHA.

Admittedly, there are many literary attempts to interpret the entire construction of the *Kalachakra Tantra* as the symbolic playing out of psychic/spiritual processes which ought to be accessible to any person who sets out upon the *Vajrayana* path. But there is a strong suspicion — and in our historical section we table conclusive evidence for this — that the ideas and the goals of the Time Tantra are meant literally, i.e., that we are concerned with a *real dominus mundi* (world ruler), with the establishment of a *real* Buddhocracy, the *real* Buddhization of our planet — even (as the *Shambhala* myth prophesies) through military force.

But perhaps the *Shambhala* vision is even more concrete, then the concept of an ADI BUDDHA and a *Chakravartin* can only refer to one present-day individual, who has for years and uncontestedly fulfilled all the esoteric conditions of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. This individual is His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

The Time Tantra would then form the ideological and dogmatic basis of a strategy for the spiritual conquest of our planet by the Tibetan god-king. Thus, if we wish to understand his political decisions in their full depth, we must start with the magic metapolitics of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, since both levels (the ritual/magical, and the real/political) are — as we will demonstrate through many examples — intimately interwoven in the ancient world of Lamaism. The autocratic religious system of the god-king integrates all the social domains and political powers which have been separated in our Western culture at least since the North American and French Revolutions. The Dalai Lama is — according to the doctrine — Emperor and Pope, state and god in one person, he is the living sacred center of a “Buddhocracy”.

He meets all the criteria we have brought to light for a tantric world ruler (*Chakravartin*) or an ADI BUDDHA. But, since he does not really govern our planets, his rituals and political powerplay decisions, his negotiations and his statements must all be seen as tactical and strategic steps towards the eventual achievement of the final global goal (of world domination). [2] This ambitious enterprise will in no way be interrupted by the death of the god-king, since he can — reincarnated — build upon the acts of his predecessor (which he also was) and continue his work.

His Holiness would never publicly admit that he aspired to the global role of a *Chakravartin* through the *Kalachakra* initiations. Yet numerous symbolic events which have accompanied his ceremonial life since childhood are harbingers of his unrestricted claim to “world domination”. In 1940, as a five year-old, he was led with much ostentation into the *Potala*, the “Palace of the Gods”, and seated upon the richly symbolic “Lion Throne”. This enthronement already demonstrated his kingship of the world and expressed his right to worldly power, as the “Lion Throne”, in contrast to the Seat of the Lotus, is a symbol of the *imperium* (secular power) and not the *sacerdotium* (spiritual power). On 17 November 1950, the god-king was ceremoniously handed the “Golden Wheel”, which identified him as the “universal wheel turner” (*Chakravartin*).

But it is less these insignia of power which make him (who has lost his entire land) a potential planetary sovereign in the eyes of his Western believers, [3] than the fact that a long dormant image of desire has resurfaced in the imaginations of Europeans and Americans. “Which people, which nation, which culture”, Claude B. Levenson enthuses about the Dalai Lama, for example, “has not, within its collective consciousness, dreamed of a perfect monarch, who, imbued with a sense of justice and equanimity, is entrusted to watch over the well-ordered course of a harmonic and in every sense just society? The image of the Great King also nestles somewhere in the depths of the human spirit ... there is something of Judgment Day and the Resurrection in these manifold interpretations of sincere belief” (Levenson 1990, p.303).

Such a global dominion, that is, total power over the earth, contradicts the apparent total political impotence of the Dalai Lama which is enhanced by his constantly repeated statements of self-denial (“I am just a simple monk”). But let us not forget the tantric play upon paradox and the “law of inversion”. This secular powerlessness is precisely the precondition for the miracle which reveals how the lowly, the empty, and the weak give rise to the exalted, the abundant, and the strong. The “simple monk from Tibet” can — if the doctrines of his tantric texts are correct — count on the dizzying rotation which will one day hurl him high from the depths of impotence to become the most powerful ruler of the universe. Absolute modesty and absolute power are for him as Tantric two sides of the same coin.

The Dalai Lama never appears in the public light as a Tantric, but always as a *Mahayana* Bodhisattva, who thinks only upon the suffering of all living beings, and regards it with deepest compassion. Tantrism, upon which Tibetan Buddhism in its entirety is essentially based, thus belongs to the shadow side of the Kundun (“living Buddha”). His sexual magic rites shun the light just as much as the claims for global domination they intend. This is especially true of the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

We mentioned already in the introduction that a person can deny, suppress, or outwardly project his shadow. Insofar as he knowingly veils the procedures which take place in the highest initiation of the Time Tantra, the Dalai Lama *denies* his tantric shadow; in as far as he is probably unclear about the catastrophic consequences of the Shambhala myth (as we will demonstrate in the case of Shoko Asahara), he *suppresses* his tantric shadow; insofar as he transfers everything negative,

which according to the “law of inversion” represents the starting substance (*prima materia*) for spiritual transformation anyway, to the Chinese, he *projects* his tantric shadow onto others.

The aggression and morbidity of the tantra, the sexual excesses, the “female sacrifice”, the “vampirism” of energy, the omnipotent power claims, the global destructive frenzy — all of these are systematically disguised by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, and can, even when the majority of the tantric texts are publicly available, be still further disguised — on the one hand by the argument that it is all only a matter of symbolic events that would never be conducted in reality, and, on the other hand, by the tantras’ claim that any negative actions have transformed themselves into positive ones by the end of the ritual.

As far as the first argument is concerned, we have been able to present numerous cases where the tantric texts have been interpreted thoroughly literally. Further, we have shown that this argument collapses upon itself, since no distinction between symbol and reality may be drawn by a *Vajrayana* Buddhist, as opposed to a contemporary “westerner”.

The second argument, that the tantras transform the negative into the positive (i.e., would call upon the devil to drive the devil out), needs to be able to stand up to empirical testing. The most telling body of evidence for the tantric theory, in particular for the philosophy and vision of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, is history itself. Over many hundreds of years thousands of tantric rituals have been performed in Tibet; for centuries people have tried to influence the history of the country through tantric rituals. But what, up to now, has this ritual politics achieved for the Tibetans and for humanity, and what is it aiming to achieve? We will consider the use of Buddhist Tantrism as a political method for better understanding the history of Tibet and influencing the country's destiny in the following, second part of our book. Here, our topic will be the influence of *Vajrayana* upon the Buddhist state, the economy, the military, upon foreign affairs and world politics.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] One must ask here whether we can really talk about a will, since the whole cosmic system of Buddhist Tantrism resembles a mega-machine which destroys itself and then sets itself in motion once more along the same lines as before. This would make the ADI BUDDHA much more of a mechanical world clock than a being who possesses free will.

[2] For this reason we must regard statements on practical politics by the Dalai Lama, which contradict the ideas of the Time Tantra (like, for instance his professions of belief in western democracy), as a mere tactic or trick (*upaya*) in order to mislead those around him as to his true intentions (the establishment of a worldwide Buddhocracy).

[3] For Tibetans and Mongolians who believe in Lamaism, the conception of the Dalai Lama as the *Chakravartin* is a matter of course.

## Part II

# POLITICS AS RITUAL

The Shambhalization plan for Japan is the first step toward  
the Shambhalization of the world. If you participate in it,  
you will achieve great virtue and rise up to a higher world

Shoko Asahara

In order to be able to understand and to evaluate the person of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the history of Tibet, we must first set aside all of our *contemporary* western conceptions in which the domains of religion and politics, of magic and government decisions, and of worldly and spiritual power are separate from one another. We must also not allow ourselves to be influenced by the public self-presentation of the exiled Tibetan head of state, by his declarations of belief in democracy, by his insistent affirmations of peace, by his ecumenical professions, or by his statements on practical politics. Then a closer examination reveals the entire performance, oriented to western values, which he offers daily on the world political stage, to be a political tactic, with the help of which he wants to put through his atavistic and androcentric world view globally — a world view whose dominant principles are steeped in magic, ritual, occultism, and the despotism of an ecclesiastical state.

It is not the individual political transgressions of the Dalai Lama, which have only been begun to be denounced in the Euro-American media since 1996, which could make his person and office a fundamental problem for the West. Even if these “deficiencies” weigh more heavily when measured against the moral claims of a “living Buddha” than they would for an ordinary politician, these are simply superficial discordances. In contrast, anybody who descends more deeply into the Tibetan system must inevitably enter the sexual magic world of the tantras which we have described. This opens up a dimension completely foreign to a westerner. For his “modern” awareness, there is no relation whatsoever between the tantric system of rituals and the *realpolitik* of the head of the Tibetan government in exile. He would hardly take seriously the derivation of political decisions from the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala Myth*. But it is precisely this connection between ritual and politics, between sacred sexuality and power which is — as we shall demonstrate — the central concern of Lamaism.

European-American ignorance in the face of atavistic religious currents is not limited to Tibetan Buddhism, but likewise applies to other cultures, like Islam for example. It is currently usual in the West to draw a stark distinction between religious fundamentalism on the one hand, and the actual human political concerns of all religions on the other. The result has been that all the religious traditions of the world were able to infiltrate Europe and North America as valuable spiritual alternatives to the decadent materialism of the industrialized world. In recent years there has not been much demand for a sustained critical evaluation of religions.

Yet anybody who reads closely the holy texts of the various schools of belief (be it the *Koran*, passages from the *Old Testament*, the Christian *Book of Revelations*, or the *Kalachakra Tantra*), is very soon confronted with an explosive potential for aggression, which must inevitably lead to bloody wars between cultures, and has always done so in the past. Fundamentalism is already present in the *core* of nearly all world religions and in no sense does it represent an essential misunderstanding of the true doctrine. [1]

The Dalai Lama is without doubt the most skilled and successful of all religious leaders in the infiltration of the West. He displays such an informed, tolerant, and apparently natural manner in public, that everybody is enchanted by him from first sight. It would not occur to anybody upon whom he turns his kindly Buddha smile that his religious system is intent upon forcibly subjecting the world to its law. But — as we wish to demonstrate in what follows — this is Lamaism's persistently pursued goal.

Although understandable, this western naiveté and ignorance cannot be excused — not just because it has up until now neglected to thoroughly and critically investigate the history of Tibet and the religion of Tantric Buddhism, but because we have also completely forgotten that we had to free ourselves at great cost from an atavistic world. The despotism of the church, the inquisition, the deprivation of the right to decide, the elimination of the will, the contempt for the individual, the censorship, the persecution of those of other faiths — were all difficult obstacles to overcome in the development of modern western culture. The Occident ousted its old “gods” and myths during the Enlightenment; now it is re-importing them through the uncritical adoption of exotic religious systems. Since the West is firmly convinced that the separation of state and religion must be apparent to every reasonable person, it is unwilling and unable to comprehend the politico-religious processes of the imported atavistic cultures. Fascism, for example, was a classic case of the reactivation of ancient myths.

Nearly all of the religious dogmata of Tantric Buddhism have also — with variations — cropped up in the European past and form a part of our western inheritance. For this reason it seems sensible, before we examine the history of Tibet and the politics of the Dalai Lama, to compare several maxims of Lamaist political and historical thought with corresponding conceptions from

the occidental tradition. This will, we hope, help the reader better understand the visions of the “living Buddha”.

### Myth and history

For the Ancient Greeks of Homer’s time, history had no intrinsic value; it was experienced as the recollection of myth. The myths of the gods, and later those of the heroes, formed so to speak those original events which were re-enacted in thousands of variations by people here on earth, and this “re-enactment” was known as history. History was thus no more and no less than the mortal imitation of divine myths. “When something should be decided among the humans,” — W. F. Otto has written of the ancient world view of the Hellenes — “the dispute must first take place between the gods” (quoted by Hübner, 1985, p. 131).

If, however, historical events, such as the Trojan War for example, developed an inordinate significance, then the boundary between myth and history became blurred. The historical incidents could now themselves become myths, or better the reverse, the myth seized hold of history so as to incorporate it and make it similar. For the ancient peoples, this “mythologizing” of history signified something very concrete — namely the direct intervention of the gods in historical events. This was not conceived of as something dark and mysterious, but rather very clear and contemporary: either the divinities appeared in visible human form (and fought in battles for instance) or they “possessed” human protagonists and “inspired” them to great deeds and misdeeds.

If human history is dependent upon the will of supernatural beings in the ancient view of things, then it is a necessary conclusion that humans cannot influence history directly, but rather only via a religious “detour”, that is, through entreating the gods. For this reason, the priests, who could establish direct contact with the transcendent powers, had much weight in politics. The ritual, the oracle, and the prayer thus had primary status in ancient societies and were often more highly valued than the decisions of a regent. In particular, the sacrificial rite performed by the priests was regarded as the actual reason whether or not a political decision met with success. The more valuable the sacrifice, the greater the likelihood that the gods would prove merciful. For this reason, and in order to be able to even begin the war against Troy, Agamemnon let his own daughter, Iphigeneia, be ritually killed in Aulis.

Very similar concepts — as we shall demonstrate — still today dominate the archaic historical understanding of Lamaist Buddhism. Religion and history are not separated from one another in the Tibetan world view, nor politics and ritual, symbol and reality. Since superhuman forces and powers (Buddha beings and gods) are at work behind the human sphere, for Lamaism history is at heart the deeds of various deities and not the activity of politicians, army leaders and opinion

makers. The characters, the motives, the methods and actions of individual gods (and demons) must thus be made answerable in the final instance for the development of national and global politics. Consequently, the Tibetan study of history is — in their own conception — always mythology as well, when we take the latter to mean the “history of the gods”.

What is true of history applies in the same degree to politics. According to tantric doctrine, a sacred ruler (such as the Dalai Lama for example) does not just command his subjects through the spoken and written word, but also conducts various internal (meditative) and external rituals so as to thus steer or at least influence his practical politics. Ritual and politics, oracular systems and political decision-making processes are united not just in the Tibet of old, but also — astonishingly indeed — still today among the Tibetans in exile. Centrally, for the Lamaist elite, “politics” means a sequence of ritual/magical activities for the fulfillment of a cosmic plan which is finally executed by the gods (of whom the Lamas are incarnations). It is for this reason that ritual life has such an important, indeed central status in a Buddhocratic state system. This is the real smithy in which the reality of this archaic society was shaped. That apparently “normal” political processes (such as the work of a “democratic” parliament or the activities of human rights commissions for instance) exist alongside, need not — as the example of the exile Tibetans demonstrates — stand in the way of the occult ritual system; rather, it could even be said to offer the necessary veil to obscure the primary processes.

### **The battle of the sexes and history**

Let us return to Homer and his times. The Trojan War vividly demonstrates how closely the history of the ancient Greeks was linked to the battle of the sexes. A number of gender conflicts together formed the events which triggered war: The decision of Paris and the vanity of the three chief goddesses (Hera, Athena, Aphrodite), the theft and the infidelity of Helen and the sacrifice of Iphigeneia. The end of the long drawn out and terrible war is also marked by bloody sexual topics: The treacherous murder of Agamemnon by his wife Clytemnestra, her death at the hands of her son Orestes, the flight of Aeneas (from Troy) and his marriage to Dido (the Queen of Carthage), the suicide of the abandoned Dido and the founding of the Roman dynasties (through Aeneas).

The writer and researcher of myths, Robert Ranke Graves (1895-1985), in a study which has in the meantime received academic recognition, assembled a voluminous amount of material which adequately supports his hypothesis that hidden behind all (!) the Greek mythology and early history lies a battle of the sexes between matriarchal and patriarchal societal forms. This “subterranean” mythic/sexual current which barely comes to light, and which propels human history forwards from the depths of the subconscious, was also a fact for Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). In his comprehensive essay, *Totem und Tabu* [Totem and Taboo], he attempted to draw attention to the sexual origins of human culture.

As we shall show, this is no different for the Lamaist “writing of history”: on the basis of the sex-specific construction of the entire tantric universe (masculine, feminine, androgynous), Tibetan history also presupposes a mythologically based gender relation. Since *Vajrayana* essentially requires the suppression of the feminine principle by the masculine principle, of the woman by the man, the history of Tibet is analogously grounded in the repression of the feminine by the masculine. Likewise, we find “female sacrifice” carried out at the center of the tantric mysteries once more in the “myth-history” of the country.

### The sacred kingdom

In many ancient societies the “sacred king” was regarded as the representative of the gods. Worldly and spiritual power were concentrated within this figure. His proximity to the gods was judged differently from culture to culture. In the old oriental community the kings exceeded the deputizing function and were themselves considered to be the deity. This gave them the right to rule with absolute power over their subjects. Their godly likeness was in no way contradicted by their mortality, then it was believed that the spirit of the god withdrew from the human body of the holy king at the hour of his death so as to then incarnate anew in the succeeding ruler. The history of the sacred kings was thus actually an “epiphany”, that is, an appearance of the deity in time.

In the European Middle Ages in contrast, the “sacred rulers” were only considered to be God’s *representatives* on earth, but the concept of their dual role as mortal man and divine instance still had its validity. One therefore spoke of the “two bodies of the king”, an eternal supernatural one and a transient human one.

A further characteristic of the political theology of the Middle Ages consisted in the division of the royal office which formerly encompassed both domains — so that (1) the spiritual and (2) the secular missions were conducted by two different individuals, the priest and the king, the Pope and the Emperor. Both institutions together — or in opposition to one another — decisively determined the history of Europe up until modern times.

Every criterion for the sacred kingdom is met by the Dalai Lama and his state system. His institution is not even subject to the division of powers (between priesthood and kingship) which we know from medieval Europe, but orientates itself towards the ancient/Oriental despotic states (e.g., in Egypt and Persia). Worldly and spiritual power are rolled into one. He is not the human deput’y of a Buddha being upon the Lion Throne; rather, he is — according to doctrine — this Buddha being himself. His epithet, *Kundun*, which is on everybody’s lips following Martin Scorsese’s film of the same name, means “the presence” or “precious presence”, i.e., the presence of a deity, or of a Buddha in human form. To translate “*Kundun*” as “living Buddha” is thus thoroughly justified. In *Playboy*, in answer to the question of the word’s meaning, His Holiness

replied, "Precious presence. According to Tibetan tradition '*Kundun*' is a term with which I alone can be referred to. It is taken to mean the highest level of spiritual development which a being [that is, not just a person, but also a god] can attain" (*Playboy*, German edition, March 1998, p. 40).

The visible presence (*Kundun*) of a god on the world political stage as the head of government of a "democratically elected parliament" may be difficult to conceive of in a western way of thinking. Perhaps the office can be better understood when we say that the Dalai Lama is strictly bound to his tantric philosophy, ritual procedures, and politico-religious ideology, and therefore possesses no further individual will. His body, his human existence, and hence also his humanism are for him solely the instruments of his divinity. This is most clearly expressed in a song the Seventh Dalai Lama composed and sang to himself:

**Wherever you go, whatever you do,**

**See yourself in the form of a tantric divinity**

**With a phantom body that is manifest yet empty.**

(Mullin, 1991, p. 61)

Nonetheless, it has become thoroughly established practice in the western press to refer to the Dalai Lama as the "god-king". Whether or not this is meant ironically can barely be decided in many cases. "A god to lay your hands on", wrote the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in 1998 of the Tibetan religious leader, and at the same time the *Spiegel* proclaimed that, "Ultimately, he is the Dalai Lama and the most enlightened of the enlightened on this planet, that puts things in the proper light." (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* November 1, 1998, p. 4; *Spiegel* 45/1998, p.101).

### **Eschatology and politics**

The history of the European Middle Ages was focused upon a single cosmic event: the Second Coming of Christ. In such an *eschatological* world view, human history is no longer a copying of myths or a playground for divine caprice (as in the Ancient Greek belief in the gods), but rather the performance of a gigantic, messianic drama played out over millennia, which opens with a perfect creation that then constantly disintegrates because of human imperfection and sin and ends in a catastrophic downfall following a divine day of judgment. At the "end of time" the evil are destroyed in a brutal cosmic war (the apocalypse) and the good (the true Christians) are saved. A Messiah appears and leads the small flock of the chosen into an eternal realm of peace and joy. The goal is called redemption and paradise.

Eschatological accounts of history are always *salvational history*, that is, in the beginning there is a transgression which should be healed. A Christian refers to this transgression as original sin. Here the healing takes place through the Resurrection and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, as well as through the resurrection from the dead of the goodly which this occasions. After this, history comes to an end and the people, freed from all suffering, enter an eternal paradise in a blissful time without history. For Christians it is primarily the Apocalypse of St. John (*The Book of Revelations*) which provides the script for this divine theater.

From a Buddhist/tantric point of view human history — and consequently the history of Tibet — is also experienced as a “salvational history”. Its eschatology is recorded in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, the highest cult mystery of the Dalai Lama. The *Shambhala myth* linked with this tantra also prophesies (like the *Apocalypse of St. John*) the appearance of a warlike messiah (*Rudra Chakrin*) and the terrible final battle between good and evil. It is just that this time the good are Buddhists and the evil are primarily Moslems. After *Rudra Chakrin*’s victory the total “Shambhalization” of the planet (i.e., a global Buddhocracy) awaits humanity. This is equated with an Eden of peace and joy.

A knowledge of the Shambhala vision is necessary in order to be able to assess historical events in Tibet (including the Chinese occupation) and the politics of the Dalai Lama. Every historical and practical political event must — from a Lamaist viewpoint — be assessed in the light of the final goal formulated in the *Kalachakra Tantra* (the establishment of a worldwide Buddhocracy). This also applies — according to the tantric teachings — to the evolution of humankind.

Thus, in terms of principle, the Tantric Buddhist vision resembles the traditional Christian one. In both cases a realm of bliss is found at the outset which decays due to human misdeeds and subsequently experiences a catastrophic downfall. It is then re-created through the *warlike* (!) deeds of a messianic redeemer. But in the Buddhist view this dramatic process never ends, according to cosmic laws it must be constantly repeated. In contrast to the conceptions of Christianity, the newly established paradise has no permanency, it is subject to the curse of time like all which is transient. History for Lamaism thus takes the form of the eternal recurrence of the eternally same, the ineluctable repetition of the entire universal course of events in immensely huge cycles of time. [2]

### History and mysticism

That the relationship between individuals and history may be not just an obvious, active one, but also a mystical one is something of which one hears little in contemporary western philosophy.

We find such a point of view in the enigmatic statement of the German romantic, Novalis (1772-1801), for example: “The greatest secret is the person itself. The solving of this unending task is the act of world history”. [3]

In contrast, in the Renaissance such “occult” interdependencies were definitely topical. The micro/macrocosm theory, which postulated homologies between the energy body of a “divine” individual and the whole universe, was widely distributed at the time. They were also applied to history in alchemic circles.

Correspondingly, there was the idea of the *Zaddik*, the “just”, in the traditional Jewish Cabala and in Chassidism. The mission of the *Zaddik* consisted in a correct and exemplary way of life so as to produce social harmony and peace. His thoughts and deeds were so closely aligned with the national community to which he belonged that the history of his people developed in parallel to his individual fate. Hence, for example the misbehavior of a *Zaddik* had a negative effect upon historical process and could plunge his fellow humans into ruin.

Yet such conceptions only very vaguely outline the far more thorough-going relation of Buddhist Tantrism to history. A tantra master must — if he is to abide by his own ideas and his micro/macrocosmic logic — take literally the magical correspondences between his awareness and the external world. He must be convinced that he (as *Maha Siddha*, i.e., Great Sorcerer) is able to exert an influence upon the course of history through sinking in to meditation, through breathing techniques, through ritual actions, and through sexual magic practices. He must make the deities he conjures up or represents the agents of his “politics”, much more than the people who surround him.

A king initiated into the mysteries of *Vajrayana* thus controls not just his country and his subjects, but also even the course of the stars with the help of his mystic breathing. “The cosmos, as it reveals itself to be in the tantric conception”, Mircea Eliade writes, “is a great fabric of magic forces, and namely these forces can also be awakened and ordered in the human body through the techniques of mystic physiology” (Eliade, 85, p. 225).

A dependency of events in the world upon the sacred practices of initiated individuals may sound absurd to us, but it possesses its own logic and persuasive power. If, for example, we examine the history of Tibet from the point of view of tantric philosophy, then to our astonishment we ascertain that the Lamas have succeeded very well in formulating an internally consistent salvational and symbolic history of the Land of Snows. [4] They have even managed to tailor this to the person of the Dalai Lama from its beginnings, even though this latter institution was only

established as a political power factor 900 (!) years after the Buddhization of the country (in the eighth century C.E.).

It is above all the doctrine of incarnation which offers a cogently powerful argument for the political continuity of the same power elite beyond their deaths. With it their power political mandate is ensured for all time. But the incarnations have likewise been backdated into the past so as to lay claim to politically significant “forefathers”. The Fifth Dalai Lama made extensive use of this procedure.

Thus, in order to present and to understand the Tibetan conception of history and the “politics” of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, we are confronted with the four ideas from an ancient world view described above:

- 1. Tibet’s history and politics are determined by the Tibetan gods.**
- 2. Tibet’s history and politics are the expression of a mythic battle of the sexes.**
- 3. Tibet’s history and politics orient themselves to the eschatological plan of the *Kalachakra Tantra*.**
- 4. Tibet’s history and politics are the magical achievement of a highest tantra master (the Dalai Lama), who steers the fate of his country as a *sacred king* and *yogi*.**

Even if one discards these theses on principle as fantasy, it remains necessary to proceed from them in order to adequately demonstrate and assess the *self-concept* of Tantric Buddhism, of the Dalai Lama, the leading exile Tibetan, and the many western Buddhists who have joined this religion in recent years. Although we in no sense share the Tibetan viewpoint, we are nonetheless convinced that the “great fabric of magic forces” (which characterizes Tantrism in the words of Mircea Eliade) can shape historical reality when many believe in it.

In the following chapters we thus depict the history of Tibet and the politics of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama as a tantric project, as the emanation of divine archetypes, and as a sequence of scenes in the dramaturgy of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, just as it is also seen by Lamaists. We must therefore first of all introduce the reader to the chief gods who have occupied the political stage of the Land of Snows since the Buddhization of Tibet. Then on a metaphysical level the Lamaist monastic state is considered to be the organized assembly of numerous deities, who have been appearing

in human form (as various lamas) again and again for centuries. We are confronted here with a living “theocracy”, or better, “Buddhocracy”. It is the Tibetan gods to whom Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, has made his human body available and who speak and act through him. This may be the reason why His Holiness, as he crossed the border into India on his flight from Tibet in 1959, yelled as loudly as he could, “*Lha Gyelo* — Victory to the gods!” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 168). With this cry he opened them the gateway to the world, especially to the West.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] Should a world civilization oriented to humane values wish to establish the causes of the “battle of cultures” and the current global incidence of fundamentalism, then it would be well advised to critically examine the “holy texts”, rites, mysteries, and history of the religious traditions and compare them with the requirements of a planetary, human political vision. Such research and comparison would produce sobering results. It was precisely such painful and disillusioning realizations which motivated us to write this study of Tibetan Buddhism and the Dalai Lama, in whom we had invested great hopes.

[2] Traces of a cyclical image of history are also found in the thought of Oswald Spenglers (1880-1936), for whom every historical cultural epoch behaved like an organism which exhibited the phases of life of birth, childhood, youth, adulthood, old age, and death. The study of history is thus for him a biography which must be written afresh for every culture.

[3] We can find a faint echo of this mystical historical speculation in the cult of the genius of the 19th. and 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this, messiah figures and saviors are replaced by those exceptional figures whom Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) referred to as “heroes” and in whose thoughts and deeds the *Zeitgeist* is supposed to be focused. In this point of view it is not just in politicians and military leaders, but also in scientists, philosophers, or artists that the essence of history can be concentrated. For the cultural critic, Eugen Friedell (1878-1938), the spirit of a historical genius infected an entire epoch. He becomes a “god” of his period — even if he introduces rationalism, like René Descartes or dialectical materialism like Karl Marx.

[4] In the meantime the historical facts they have distorted have been taken up by numerous “respectable” scholarly works from the West. We shall go into the particulars of this.

# 1. THE DALAI LAMA:

## INCARNATION OF THE TIBETAN GODS

The two principal divine beings who act through the person of the Dalai Lama are the Bodhisattva, *Avalokiteshvara* (in Tibetan, *Chenrezi*), and the meditation Buddha, *Amitabha*. Spiritually, *Amitabha* is on a higher level (as a Buddha). He does not “lower” himself directly into the “god-king” (the Dalai Lama), but appears first in the form of *Avalokiteshvara*. Only *Chenrezi* then takes on the bodily form of the Dalai Lama.

### Buddha Amitabha: The sun and light deity

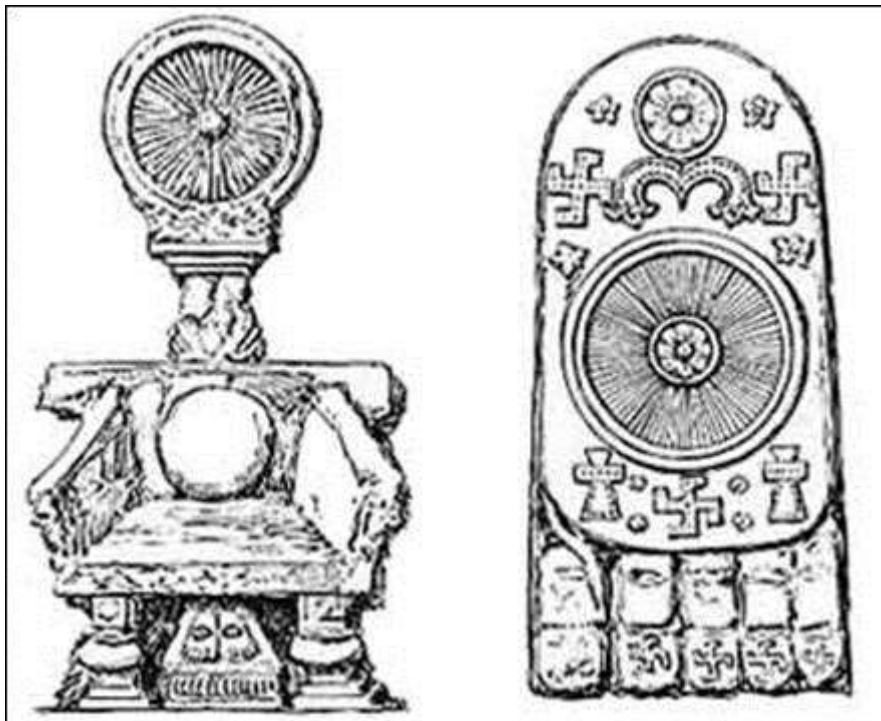
The meditation Buddha, *Amitabha*, rules —according to a point of doctrine of *Mahayana* Buddhism — as regent of the current age. Even the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni, was considered his earthly emanation. The sun and light are assigned to him and summer is his season. The peacock, a classic animal of the sun, adorns his throne. The red color of *Amitabha*’s body also signals his solar character. Likewise, his mantra, “HRIH”, is referred to as a “sun symbol”: “It possesses not just the warmth of the sun, that is, the emotional principle of kindness and of pity — but also the brilliance, the quality of clarification, the discovery, the unmediated perception” (Govinda, 1984, p. 277). *Amitabha* is the Buddhist god of light *par excellence* and his followers thus pray to him as the “shining lord “. As the “unbounded light” he shines through the whole universe. His luminance is described in ancient texts as “a hundred thousand times greater than the radiance of gold” (Joseph Campbell, 1973, p. 315).

The opulent sun symbolism which is so closely linked to the figure of this Buddha has led several western oriented scholars to describe Buddhism in total as a solar cult. For example, the tantra researcher, Shashibhusan Dasgupta, even sees an identity between the historical Buddha (the incarnation of *Amitabha*), the *Dharma* (the Buddhist doctrine) and the Indian solar deity (*Surya*) (Dasgupta, 1946, p. 337). The *Dharma* (the teachings) are also often referred to as the “sun” in traditional Buddhist writings, since the words of Buddha “radiate like sunshine”. Sometimes even the principle of “emptiness” is identified with the sun: “*Dharma* is *Shunya* [emptiness] and *Shunya* has the form of a zero”, writes Dasgupta, “Therefore Dharma is of the shape of a zero; and as the sun is also of the shape of a zero, Dharma is identified with the sun. Moreover, Dharma moves in the void, and void is the sky, and the sun moves in the sky and hence the sun is Dharma” (Dasgupta, 1946, p. 337).

*Amitabha* and the historical Buddha are not just associated with the sun, but also with the element of “fire”. “As for the Fiery-Energy,” Ananda Coomaraswamy tells us, “ this is the element of fire present as an unseen energy in all existences, but preeminently manifested by *Arhats* [holy men] or the Buddha” (Coomaraswamy, 1979, p. 10).

There are a number of depictions of Gautama as a “pillar of fire” from as early as the third century B.C.E. (Coomaraswamy, 1979, p. 210). The column of fire is both a symbol for the axis of the world and for the human spine up which the *Kundalini* ascends. It further has a clear phallic character. A Nepalese text refers to the ADI BUDDHA as a “linga-shaped [phallic] flame” which rises from a lotus (Hazra, 1986, p. 30). This close relation of the Buddha figure to fire has induced such discriminating authors as the Indian religious studies scholar, Ananda Coomaraswamy, to see in Shakyamuni an incarnation of *Agni*, the Indian god of fire (Coomaraswamy, 1979, p. 65).

Yet the power of fire is not only positively valued in Indian mythology. In the hot subcontinent, destructive forces are also evoked by sun and flame. Notorious demons, not just gods, laid claim to be descended from *Surya*, the sun god. Hence, the Indologist, Heinrich Zimmer, recounted several traditional stories in which demonic yogis reached for divine power through the generation of inner heat. He calls this fiery yogic force *tapas*, which means roughly “inner blaze”.



### ***Throne and Foot of the Buddha with sun symbols and swastikas***

In contrast, Lama Govinda completely represses the destructive force of the *tapas* and simply declares them to be the main principle of Buddhist mysticism: “It is the all-consuming, flaming power, the inner blaze which overwhelms everything, which has filled the religious life of the people in its thrall since the awakening of Indian thought: the power of the Tapas ... Here, Tapas is the creative principle, which functions in both the material and the spiritual [domains] ... It is 'enthusiasm', in its most lowly form a straw fire fed by blind emotion, in its highest, the flame of inspiration nourished by unmediated perception. Both have the nature of fire” (Govinda, 1991, p. 188). With this citation Govinda leaves us with no doubt that Tantric Buddhism represents a universal fire cult. [1]

Already in Vedic times fire was considered to be the cause of life. The ancient Indians saw a fire ritual in the sexual act between man and woman and compared it with the rubbing together of two pieces of wood through which a flame can be kindled. The spheres assigned to the “fire Buddha”, *Amitabha*, are thus also those of erotic passion and sexuality. Of the sexual magic fluids, the male seed is associated with him. This makes him the predestined father of Tantric Buddhism. In his hand the “fire god” holds a lotus, by which his affinity to the symbolic world of the feminine is indicated. “The Lotus lineage is that of *Amitabha*”, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama writes in a commentary upon the *Kalachakra Tantra*, “practitioners of which especially should keep the pledge of restraining from, or abandoning, the bliss of emission, even though making use of a consort” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1985, p. 229).

*Amitabha* rules as the sovereign of the western paradise, *Sukhavati*. After their deaths, upright Buddhists are reborn here from out of a lotus flower. They all move through this hereafter in a golden body. Women, however, are unwelcome. If they have earned great merit during their earthly existence, then they are granted the right to change their sex and they are permitted to enter *Amitabha*'s land after they have been incarnated as men. [2]

Apart from this, the light Buddha is worshipped as the “lord of language”. Analytic thought and distinctions also belong to his area of responsibility. This induced Lama Govinda to make him the patron of the modern (and western) sciences. He is “differentiating”, “researching” and “investigative” (Govinda, 1984, p.123).

Let us summarize then: Buddha *Amitabha* possesses the character traits of a light, fire, and sun deity. His cardinal point is the West. As founding father of the Lotus family he stands in a deep symbolic connection to sexuality and through this to Tantrism.

In the light of his qualities as “fire god”, “lord of the West”, and “patron of science”, *Amitabha* could indeed be regarded as the regent of our modern age, then the last two hundred years of western civilization and technological development have been predominantly dominated by the element of fire: electricity, light, explosions, and the modern art of war count as part of this just as much as the greenhouse effect and worldwide desertification. The great inventions — the steam engine, dynamite, the automobile, the airplane, rockets, and finally the atomic bomb — are also the handiwork of “fire”. The fiery element rules the world as never before in history.

Committed Buddhists — headed by the Dalai Lama — describe our western civilization as decadent and unbalanced, because it is no longer fair to spiritual values. But, one could say, an elementary imbalance likewise determines the myth of the “world dominion” of *Amitabha*, who as the Buddha of a single (!) element (“fire”) controls our epoch. In terms of cultural history, fire and the sun can be considered the classic patriarchal symbols, whilst the moon and water represent the feminine. Hence, *Amitabha* is also a symbol for our global androcentric culture, which, however, can only develop its complete purity when totally freed of women in the paradise of *Sukhavati*.

### **The various masks of Avalokiteshvara**

As an emanation from the right eye of his spiritual father, *Amitabha*, emerged his son, *Avalokiteshvara*, with the Tibetan name of *Chenrezi*. He is the “Bodhisattva” of our age, the “chief deity” of Tibet and the divine energy which functions directly behind the person of the Dalai Lama. There is no figure in the Buddhist pantheon who enjoys greater respect than he does. His name means “he who looks down kindly”. He is identified by his chief characteristic of mercy and compassion for all living creatures. This close linkage to emotional life has won him the deep reverence of the masses.

*Avalokiteshvara* can appear in countless forms, 108 of which are iconographically fixed. In an official prayer, he is described as a *puer aeternus* (an eternal boy):

**Generated from ten million rays,**

**his body is completely white.**

**His head is adorned**

**and his locks reach down to his breast. [...]**

**His kindly, smiling features  
are those of a sixteen year old.**

(Lange, n.d., p. 172)

His best known and most original appearance shows him with eleven heads and a thousand arms. This figure arose — the myth would have it — after the Bodhisattva's head split apart into countless fragments because he could no longer bear the misery of this world and the stupidity of the living creatures. Thereupon his "father", *Amitabha*, took the remnants with him to the paradise of *Sukhavati* and formed ten new heads from the fragments, adding his own as the tip of the pyramid. This self-destruction out of compassion for humanity and the Bodhisattva's subsequent resurrection makes it tempting to compare this Bodhisattva's tale of suffering with the Passion of Christ.

In some *Mahayana* Buddhist texts the figure of *Avalokiteshvara* is exaggerated so that he becomes an arch-god, who absorbs within himself all the other gods, even the Highest Buddha (ADI BUDDHA). He also already appears in India (as later in Tibet in the form of the Dalai Lama) as *Chakravartin*, i.e., as a "king of all kings", as a "ruler of the world" (Mallmann, 1948, p. 104).

His believers prostrate themselves before him as the "shining lord". In one interesting picture from the collection of Prince Uchtomskij he is depicted within a circle of flame and with the disc of the sun. His epithet is "one whose body is the sun" (Gockel, 1992, p. 21). He sits upon a Lion Throne, or rides upon the back of a lion, or wears the fur of a lion. Thus, all the solar symbols of *Amitabha* and the historical Buddha are also associated with him.



***Avalokiteshvara in the form of the Death God Yama***

In the face of this splendor of light it is all too easy to forget that *Avalokiteshvara* also has his shady side. Every Buddha and every Bodhisattva — tantric doctrine says — can appear in a peaceful and a terrible form. This is also true for the Bodhisattva of supreme compassion. Among his eleven heads can be found the terrifying head of *Yama*, the god of the dead. He and *Avalokiteshvara* form a unit. Hence, as the “king of all demons” (one of *Yama*’s epithets), the “light god” also reigns over the various Buddhist hells.

*Yama* is depicted on Tibetan thangkas as a horned demon with a crown of human skulls and an aroused penis. Usually he is dancing wildly upon a bull beneath the weight of which a woman, with whom the animal is copulating, is being crushed. Fokke Sierksma and others see in this scene an attack on a pre-Buddhist (possibly matriarchal) fertility rite (Sierksma, 1966, p. 215).

As god of the dead (*Yama*) and snarling monster *Avalokiteshvara* also holds the “wheel of life” in his claws, which is in truth a “death wheel” (a sign of rebirth) in Buddhism. Among the twelve fundamental evils etched into the rim of the wheel which make an earthly/human existence appear worthless can be found “sexual love”, “pregnancy” and “birth”.

In the world of appearances *Yama* represents suffering and mortality, birth and death. So much cruelty and morbidity is associated with this figure in the tantric imagination that he all but has to be seen as the shadowy brother of the Bodhisattva of mercy and love. Yet both Buddha beings prove themselves to be a paradoxical unit. It is self-evident according to the doctrines of Tantrism that the characteristics of *Yama* can also combine themselves with the person of the Dalai Lama (the highest incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*). This has seldom been taken into consideration when meeting with the god-king from Tibet who “looks down peacefully”.

A further striking feature of the iconography of *Avalokiteshvara* are the feminine traits which many of his portraits display. He seems, as an enigmatic being between virgin and boy with soft features and rounded breasts, to unite both sexes within himself. As it says in a poem addressed to a painter:

*Draw an Avalokiteshvara,*

*Like a conch, a jasmine and a moon,*

*Hero sitting on a white lotus seat [...]*

*His face is wonderfully smiling.*

(Hopkins, 1987, p. 160)



### *Avalokiteshvara as Androgyne*

Shells, jasmine, and the moon are feminine metaphors. The Bodhisattva's epithet, *Padmapani* (lotus bearer), identifies him (just like *Amitabha*) as a member of the Lotus family and equally places him in direct connection with feminine symbolism. All over Asia the lotus is associated with the vagina. But since *Chenrezi* generally appears as a masculine figure with feminine traits, we must refer to him as an androgyne, a god who has absorbed the *gynergy* of the goddess within himself. For Robert A. Paul, he therefore assumes a "father-mother role" in Tibetan society (Paul, 1982, p. 140). The two colors in which he is graphically depicted are red and white. These correspond symbolically to the red and the white seed which are mixed with one another in the body of the tantra master.

His androgyny is most clearly recognizable in the famous mantra with which *Padmapani* (*Avalokiteshvara*) is called upon and which millions of Buddhists daily mumble to themselves: OM MANI PADME HUM. There is an extensive literature concerned with the interpretation of this utterance, from which the sexual magical ones sound the most convincing. In translation, the

mantra says, “Om, jewel in the lotus, hum”. The jewel should be assigned to the masculine force and the phallus, whilst the lotus blossom is a symbol of feminine energy. The “jewel in the lotus blossom” thus corresponds to the tantric union, and, since this takes place within a male person, the principle of androgyny. The syllable OM addresses the macrocosm. HUM means “I am” and signifies the microcosm. The gist of the formula is thus: “In the union of the masculine and feminine principles I am the universe”. Anyone who knows the magic of the famous mantra “possesses control over the world” (Mallmann, 1948, p. 101). Trijang Rinpoche (1901-1981), an important teacher of the current Dalai Lama, also offers a clear and unambiguous translation “... *mani* indicates the vajra jewel of the father, *padma* the lotus of the mudra, and the letter *hum* [indicates] that by joining these two together, at the time of the basis, a child is born and at the time of the [tantric] path, the deities emanate” (quoted by Lopez, 1998, p. 134).

The most famous living incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* is the Dalai Lama. All the energies of the Bodhisattva are concentrated in him, his androgyny as well as his solar and fiery qualities, his mildness as well as his wrath as *Yama*, the god of the dead. Within the Tibetan doctrine of incarnation the Dalai Lama as a person is only the human/bodily shell in which *Chenrezi* (*Avalokiteshvara*) is manifest. It is — from a tantric point of view — the visions and motives, strategies and tactics of the “mild downward-looking Bodhisattva”, which determine the politics of His Holiness and thereby the fate of Tibet.

### **The Fourteenth Dalai Lama as the supreme Kalachakra master**

Since the Tibetan god-king acts as the supreme master of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, the androgynous time god (*Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata* in one person) is likewise incarnated within him. The goal of Time Tantra is the “alchemic” production of the ADI BUDDHA. We have described in detail the genesis, “art of functioning”, and the extent of the powers of the Highest Buddha in the first part of our study, with special attention to his position as *Chakravartin*, as “world ruler”. This global power role is not currently assumed by the Dalai Lama. In contrast — the western public sometimes refers to him as the “most powerless politician on the planet”. Thus, in precisely locating his position along the evolutionary path of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, we must observe that the *Kundun* has not yet reached the spiritual/real level of an ADI BUDDHA, but still finds himself on the way to becoming a world ruler (*Chakravartin*).

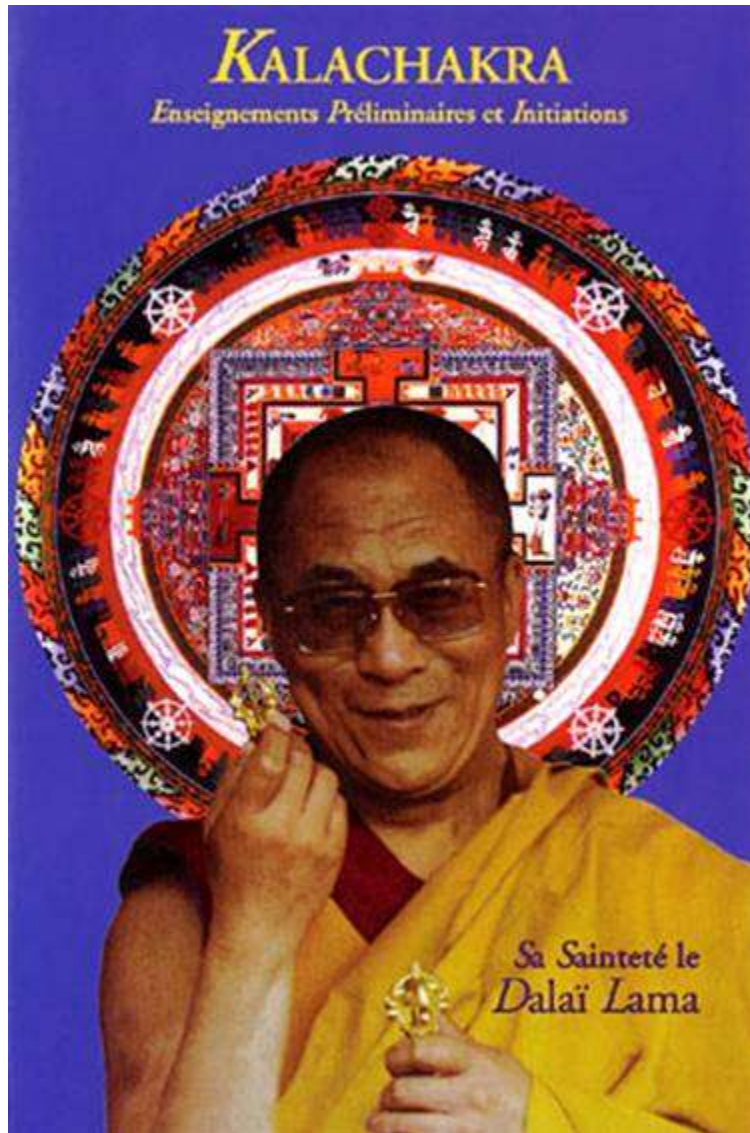
All the “divine” and “demonic” characteristics of *Avalokiteshvara* (and also ultimately of *Amitabha*) mentioned above are combined by the Tibetan “god-king” as the highest *vajra* master with the *Kalachakra Tantra*. According to what is known as the *Rwa* tradition, the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara* even stands at the beginning of the Buddhist doctrine of time as the “root guru” (Newman, 1985, p. 71). Now, what do we know about the performance of the *Kalachakra* system by the current incarnation of the *Chenrezi*, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama?

Almost nothing is known in public about the eight “highest initiations” of the Time Tantra described in the first part of our study, but all the more is known about the seven lower initiations. They have been and continue to be conducted by His Holiness — frequently, publicly, on a grand scale and throughout the whole world. The ostentatious performance of a *Kalachakra* spectacle set in scene by the monks of the *Namgyal Institute* [3] in colorful robes is meanwhile an exotic sensation, which on each occasion attracts the attention of the world’s press. Thousands, in recent years hundreds of thousands, come flocking to experience and marvel at the religious spectacle.

The *Kalachakra Tantra*, whose aggressive and imperialist character we have been able to demonstrate in detail, is referred to by the Dalai Lama without the slightest scruple as a “vehicle for world peace”: “We believe unconditionally in its ability to reduce tensions”, the god-king has said of the Time Tantra, “The initiation is thus public, because in our opinion it is suited to bringing peace, to encouraging the peace of the spirit and hence the peace of the world as well” (Levenson, 1990, p. 304).

Interested westerners, who still block out the magic-religious thought patterns of Lamaism, are presented with the *Kalachakra* ritual and the associated sand mandala as a “total work of art, in which sound and color, gesture and word are linked with one another in a many-layered, significance-laden manner” (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1 February 1986). For the Dalai Lama, however, an assembly of the invoked gods actually takes place during the rite.

In the year 1953 His Holiness was initiated into the *Kalachakra* rites by Ling Rinpoche for the first time. To what level is unknown to us. Profoundly impressed by the beauty of the sand mandala, the young *Kundun* fell into a state of dizziness. Shortly afterwards he spent a month in seclusion and was internally very moved during this period. In saying the prayers the words often stuck in his throat through emotion: “In hindsight I understand this situation to have been auspicious, an omen that I would conduct the *Kalachakra* initiation much more often than any of my predecessors” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 118).



***The Dalai Lama with the Kalachakra Mandala as aureole***

Strangely enough, the first initiation into the *Kalachakra Tantra* he performed himself (in 1954) was in his own words “at the wish of a group of lay women” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 119). We can only speculate as to whether this euphemistic phrase is used to disguise a *ganachakra* with eight or ten *karma mudras* (real women). Yet this is to be strongly suspected, then how in the Tibet of old where women did not have the slightest say in religious matters should a “group of lay women” of all people have come to enjoy the great privilege of motivating the nineteen-year-old hierarch to his first *Kalachakra* ceremony? In light of the strict court ceremonial which reigned in the Potala, this was for those times completely unthinkable, and we must therefore presume that we are dealing with a tactful reformulation of a tantric ritual involving yoginis.

His Holiness celebrated two further *Kalachakra* initiations in Lhasa in 1956 and 1957. In 1970 the first public initiation in exile (in Dharamsala) was staged. He himself had a dream shortly before this: “When I woke up, I knew that in the future I would perform this ritual many times. I think in my previous lifetimes I had a connection with the *Kalachakra* teaching. It’s a karmic force” (Bryant, 1992, p. 112). This dream was in fact to come true in the years which followed.

In the summer of 1981, the “iron bird year” of the Tibetan calendar, the god-king granted a public *Kalachakra* initiation for the first time outside of Asia. The date and the location (Wisconsin, USA) of the initiation were drawn directly from a prophecy of the Tibetan “religious founder”, Padmasambhava, who introduced *Vajrayana* to the Land of Snows from India in the eighth century: “When the iron bird flies and the horses roll on wheels ... the Dharma will come to the land of the Red Man” (Bernbaum, 1982, p. 33). The iron birds — in the interpretation of this vision — are airplanes, the wheeled horses are automobiles, and the land of the Red Man (the American Indians) is the United States. During the ritual a falcon with a snake in its claws is supposed to have appeared in the sky. In it the participants saw the mythic bird, *garuda*, representing the patriarchal power which destroys the feminine in the form of a snake. [4] Do we have here the image of a tantric wish according to which the West is already supposed to fall into the clutches of Tibetan Buddhism in the near future?

Not more than 1200 people took part in the first western initiation in Wisconsin. In 1983 the *Kalachakra* ceremony was performed in Switzerland and thus for the first time in Europe. Now there were already 6000 western participants. In the same year more than 300,000 people appeared at the initiation in Bodh Gaya (in India). This grandiose spectacle was declared by the press to be the “Buddhist event of the century” (*Tibetan Review*, January 1986, p. 4). Many very poor Tibetans had illegally crossed the Chinese border in order to take part in the festivities. It is certainly worth mentioning that at least fifty people died during the ritual! (*Tibetan Review*, January 1986, p. 6).

In 1991, in Madison Square Gardens in New York City, there was a further *Kalachakra* ceremony in front of 4000 participants which attracted much public attention. At the same time a sand mandala was constructed in the *Museum of Asian Art* which drew tens of thousands of visitors. By the beginning of 1998, the Dalai Lama could look back over 25 public initiations into the Time Tantra which he had conducted as the supreme *vajra* master.

List of Kalachakra Initiations given by the XIV Dalai Lama			
S.No.	Date	Place	Attendants
1	May 1954	Norbulingka, Lhasa, Tibet	100,000
2	April 1956	Norbulingka, Lhasa, Tibet	100,000

3	March 1970	Dharamshala, India	30,000
4	May 1971	Bylakuppe, Karnataka, India	10,000
5	December 1974	Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India	100,000
6	September 1976	Leh, Ladakh, India	40,000
7	July 1981	Madison, Wisconsin, USA	1,500
8	April 1983	Bomdila, Arunachal Pradesh, India	5,000
9	August 1983	Tabo, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, India	10,000
10	July 1985	Rikon, Switzerland	6,000
11	December 1985	Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India	200,000
12	July 1988	Zanskar, Jammu & Kashmir, India	10,000
13	July 1989	Los Angeles, USA	3,300
14	December 1990	Sarnath, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India	130,000
15	October 1991	New York, USA	3,000
16	August 1992	Kalpa, Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh, India	20,000
17	April 1993	Gangtok, Sikkim, India	100,000
18	July 1994	Jispa, Keylong, Himachal Pradesh, India	30,000
19	December 1994	Barcelona, Spain	3,000
20	January 1995	Mundgod, Karnataka, India	50,000
21	August 1995	Ulan Bator, Mongolia	30,000
22	June 1996	Tabo, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, India	20,000
23	September 1996	Sydney, Australia	3,000
24	December 1996	Salugara, West Bengal, India	200,000
25	August 1999	Bloomington, Indiana, USA	3,500
26	August 2000	Key Monastery, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, India	15,000
27	January 2002	Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India	Postponed
28	October 2002	Graz, Austria (Europe)	10,000
29	Januar 2003	Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India	200,000

The great significance which the Dalai Lama accords the *Kalachakra Tantra* and its worldwide distribution, demands that all of his political activities be interpreted in the light of the visions and intentions of the Time Tantra. The *Kalachakra Tantra* is a major political event. It is the magic metapolitical instrument with which the *Kundun* hopes to conquer the West and the rest of the world. He himself, or rather the forces and powers which operate behind him, wish(es) to become the ruler of history and time itself. [5]

## Statements of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama on sexuality and sexual magic

We know almost nothing (publicly) from the *Kundun* about the eight highest initiations in the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the associated sexual magic rites. Outwardly the god-king presents a strictly asexual image. In answer to the question what he thought about sex, he replied in *Playboy*: “My goodness! You ask a 62-year-old monk who has been celibate his entire life a thing like that. I don’t have much to say about sex — other than that it is completely okay if two people love each other” (*Playboy*, German edition, March 1998, p. 46). Or he resolves the delicate topic with colloquial humor, as for example when he quotes the Indian scholar, Nagarjuna, with a three-line thought on the question of erotic love:

**If one is itchy, then one scratches himself.**

**Better than any number of scratches**

**However, is when one does not itch at all.**

(Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 301)

Such sayings are reminiscent of the philosophy of life of a humorous *Mahayana* Buddhist, but not that of a Tantric. Whether the *Kundun* himself conducts or has conducted sexual magic practices is a secret which is for understandable reasons not betrayed. Only through incidental remarks — the taboo topic would never be spoken about in public otherwise — can it be gauged that the Dalai Lama is completely informed about the consequences which proceed from the tantric rites.

Thus, at an event in San Francisco (in 1994) His Holiness was discussing the topics of “sexuality and Buddhism” with students. When the talk came around to the “wise fool” Drungpa Kunley, who became known through his erotic escapades, his huge male member, and through the Tibetan literature, the *Kundun* justified this figure’s wild sex life: in Drungpa we are dealing with a highly developed enlightened being, and his erotic activities — no matter how bizarre they may seem to an ordinary person — were always carried out for the benefit of all living beings. “He could”, the Dalai Lama said with a smile, “enjoy excrement and urine just like fine foods and wine” and then he joked of the modern Tibetan lamas that, “If you put into their mouth some urine, they will not enjoy it” (Arianna, Newsgroup 3). From this it can be logically concluded that every enlightened one must pass the tantric “taste test” and that contemporary lamas are not prepared to undergo this test.

At an academic seminar on dream research in Dharamsala the *Kundun* commented upon a paper with the following sentence: “Such work with dreams by which it comes to ejaculation could be

important” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1996a, p. 115). Anyone who knows about the tantric seed gnosis also knows how fundamental the god-king’s interest in this topic must be. At the same meeting he chatted about orgiastic encounters as if they were a constant part of his world of experiences. A comparison of the mystic clear lights with orgasm is also self-evident for him (Dalai Lama XIV, 1996a, p. 116).

Some years later, at the „Mind and Life” conference in Dharamsala (in 1992), he spoke in great detail about tantric practices and even mentioned the offensive *Vajroli* method: “One training method that can be used as a standard of measurement of the level of one’s control entails inserting a straw into the genitals. In this practice the Yogi first draws water, and later milk, up to the straw. [Later again, we would add, the *sukra* from out of the vagina of his sexual partner] That cultivates the ability to reverse the flow during intercourse (Varela, 1997, p. 172). With a somewhat insinuating smile the Dalai Lama then explained the various typologies of the *mudras* to the western scholars who were attending: “In tantric literature, four types of women, or consorts (Skt. *mudra*) are discussed. These four types are lotus-like, deer-like, conch-shell-like, and the elephant-like.” He then joked that: “If the classification had originated in Tibet instead of India, they would have called it yak-like. These distinctions all have primarily to do with the shape of the genitals, but they also refer to differences in terms of bodily constitution. There are no such categories for men” (Varela, 1997, p. 173).

Like all priests the *Kundun*’s attitude towards marriage is benevolent and paternalistic, without granting it any special spiritual significance. “At first glance married life appears full and attractive and that of the celibate as miserable. But I believe the life of a monk is more well balanced, there are less extremes, less highs and lows. I also always tell this to my young monks and nuns as consolation” (*Zeitmagazin*, no. 44, 22 October 1998, p. 24). It is nonetheless very important to him as reproduction for the maintenance of the Tibetan race and he is not at all happy when exiled Tibetans choose marriage partners of another race. He finds it likewise repulsive when ordained monks suddenly decide to marry. As his brother Lobsang Samten told him of his marriage plans, the *Kundun* shouted at him in a reference to the Chinese repression, “Even a dog doesn’t copulate while it’s actually being beaten” (Craig, 1997, p. 260). He later excused himself for this uncontrolled outburst.

In 1997 on his journey through the USA, the Dalai Lama named oral and anal intercourse for both hetero- and homosexuals as being sexually taboo, and masturbation as well. The latter is condoned by the secret tantras when no real partner is available. Fellatio and cunnilingus are — as we have described in detail in Part 1 — even prescribed in the four highest initiations of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. But among common mortals both sexual practices are — according to a relevant sutra — punished after death by the destruction of the sexual organs in the Samghata hell. The *Kundun* declared sexual relations with a monk or a nun who has made a vow of celibacy to be especially reprehensible, naturally only when this takes place outside of the tantric rites.

Likewise, the sexual act is forbidden in temples. In contrast, intercourse with a prostitute is allowed when the customer himself pays and does not receive the money from a third party.

Both male and female homosexuality are allowed — according to the *Kundun* — as long as no oral or anal contact is practiced. It was at least politically unwise mistake to have made this statement in San Francisco, the Mecca of the American gay movement. The sexual ban immediately led to the strongest protests. “Many Americans” have been disappointed, a statement from the homosexual scene said, since they “embraced Buddhism because they thought it was not nonjudgmental in sexual matters” (Peterson, Newsgroup 6). [6]

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### Footnotes:

[1] In light of this emphasis on the solar and fiery nature which characterizes the historical Buddha, his close connection to the symbolism of snakes is puzzling, above all because snakes are associated with water and the feminine. They are known to every student of Buddhism as *nagas*, and reign as kings of the springs, brooks, streams, and lakes. In his book, *The Sun and the Serpent*, the Englishman, C. F. Oldham, has attempted to prove that Buddhist snake worship is a solar institution. During his lifetime, Buddha already enjoyed widespread adoration as *Maha Naga*, the great serpent (Oldham, 1988, p. 179). Since he and his tribe belonged to the “sun race”, conjectures this author, the snake gods also ought to be “solar”. Among other sources, he makes reference to an old sutra, where we can read of “The lord of the overpowering serpents belonging to *Surya* [the sun god]” (Oldham, 1988, p. 66). Nonetheless, we believe Oldham’s thesis, that the Buddhist snake cult had an originally solar nature, to be a false conclusion. The close connection of heliocentric Buddhism to the sphere of the snake can therefore only be explained in that Buddha subjected the *nagas* so as to consolidate his supreme rule as patriarchal sun god with this victory. This is precisely the procedure which we also know from tantric practices, where the feminine, ignited by the masculine fire energy, ultimately serves the androcentric yogi. The ignited feminine element is, as we know, referred to as *Kundalini*, that is, *fire serpent*.

[2] The “pilgrimage” of the soul to the “pure land” of the light god has in Asia become — above all in China and Japan — a widely distributed religious belief and has led to the formation of various Buddhist schools.

[3] An institution especially established for the performance of the great public initiations of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, which is under the direct supervision of the Dalai Lama.

[4] *Garuda*, the bird of prey, is presented in Tibetan mythology as a powerful snake killer. It is the fire eagle, which feeds upon the flesh of the *nagas* (snakes). We know already from the Indian national epic, the *Mahabharata*, that it belongs to the race of the sun, and that it was a totemic figure for tribes which worshipped the sun as their highest deity. The *garuda* is also the protective animal of the Dalai Lama and is mentioned in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Does it represent the fiery masculine power over the feminine snake world? Albert Grünwedel saw it in these terms when he wrote: “We know the garuda-like, awful, high-flying bird of prey which tears girls [*nagis*] apart ...” (Grünwedel, 1924, vol. II, p. 68). The author is further convinced that there is talk in the *Kalachakra Tantra* of a transformation of the *nagas* into *garudas* (Grünwedel, 1924, vol. II, p. 68; *Kalachakra IV*, p. 182). Whatever one may think of Grünwedel’s interpretation, it at any rate draws attention to the tantric mystery which can be seen to sparkle behind the *garuda* myth: the transformation of feminine water energy (the snake) by masculine fire (the *garuda*), or the absorption of the moon (the snake) by the sun (the *garuda*) as the culmination of the development of patriarchal power.

[5] Perhaps his role as supreme time god has something to do with the fact that the *Kundun* has a very special fondness for taking apart, repairing, and then reassembling modern watches? A Swiss organization of exiled Tibetans sells clocks featuring the main symbol of the *Kalachakra Tantra* (the *dasakaro vasi*) and markets these via the Internet. The monk Daoxuan (596-667) had already compared Buddhism to a clock. When a Buddha appears in the world — we

learn from him — then the clock also functions. If the clock does not keep the time, this means that the people no longer follow the Dharma. When Shakyamuni died, “the clockwork no longer functioned” (Forte, 1988, p. 259).

[6] In this connection, a text on homosexuality recently published by one of the most intimate of His Holiness's western collaborators appears quite bizarre. The most recent book by Jeffrey Hopkins, currently Professor of Tibetan Studies at the University of Virginia, has the title of *Sex, Orgasm and the Mind of Clear Light: The 64 Arts of Gay Male Sex* (Hopkins, 1996). In reading through the text we naturally asked ourselves the question: Can the tantric exchange of energies also take place between men? Is a female wisdom consort necessary at all for the performance of the sexual magic practices or may it also be a male consort? The book does not offer an answer to this and must therefore, as Hopkins himself stresses, not be regarded as a tantric text. It is much more a matter of — as he himself puts it — a homosexual *Kama Sutra*, a guide to erotic amusement. Quite a number of lecherous lines are devoted to anal intercourse, which is one of the sexual taboos for His Holiness. — One text in which homosexual tantric practices are discussed by a guru is *The Dawn Horse Testament* by Da Free John, the former spiritual teacher of the American evolutionary theorist, Ken Wilber. The author approves of homosexual rites to a limited degree, but strongly emphasizes that during the sexual magic act strictly one man must play the masculine role and the other should take the feminine role (Da, 1991, p. 348). One of the men is thus used in terms of energy as a substitute woman, which only confirms the fundamentally heterosexual orientation of Tantrism.

## 2. THE DALAI LAMA (AVALOKITESHVARA) AND THE DEMONESS (SRINMO)

History as understood in the *Kalachakra Tantra* is apocalyptic salvational history, it is — as we have said — an alchemic experiment aimed at producing an ADI BUDDHA. The protagonists in this drama are no mere mortals but gods. History and myth thus form a union. If we take the philosophy of *Vajrayana* literally then all the events of the tantric performance ought to be able to be found again in the history of Tibet. The latter should therefore be interpreted as the expression of a sexual dynamic. Before we ourselves begin to search for symbolic connections and mythic fields behind the practical political facts of Tibetan history, we should ask ourselves whether the Tibetans have not of their own accord conducted such a sex specific and sexual magic interpretation of their historical experiences.

We know that the rules of the game demand two principal actors in every tantric performance, a man and a woman, or, respectively, a god and a goddess. In any case the piece is divided into three acts:

1. The sexual magic union of god and goddess
2. The subsequent “tantric female sacrifice”
3. The production of the cosmic androgyne (ADI BUDDHA)

Let us turn our attention, then, to the individual scenes through which this cosmic theater unfolds on the “Roof of the World”. Here, the country’s myths of origin are of decisive significance, then they provide the archetypal framework from which, in an ancient conception of history, all later events may be derived.

### The bondage of the earth goddess *Srinmo* and the history of the origin of Tibet

The Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara* is considered the progenitor of the Tibetans, he thus determines events from the very beginning. In the period before there were humans on earth, the Buddha being was embodied in a monkey and passed the time in deep meditation on the “Roof of the World”. There, as if from nowhere, a rock demoness by the name of *Srinmo* appeared. The hideous figure was a descendent of the *Srin* clan, a bloodthirsty community of nature goddesses. “Spurred on by horniness” — as one text puts it — she too assumed the form of a (female) monkey and tried over seven days to seduce *Avalokiteshvara*. But the divine Bodhisattva monkey

withstood all temptations and remained untouched and chaste. As he continued to refuse on the eighth day, *Srinmo* threatened him with the following words: “King of the monkeys, listen to me and what I am thinking. Through the power of love, I very much love you. Through this power of love I woo you, and confess: If you will not be my spouse, I shall become the rock demon’s companion. If countless young rock demons then arise, every morning they will take thousands upon thousands of lives. The region of the Land of Snows itself will take on the nature of the rock demons. All other forms of life will then be consumed by the rock demons. If I myself then die as a consequence of my deed, these living beings will be plunged into hell. Think of me then, and have pity” (Hermanns, 1956, p. 32). With this she hit the bullseye. “Sexual intercourse out of compassion and for the benefit of all suffering beings” was — as we already know — a widespread “ethical” practice in *Mahayana* Buddhism. Despite this precept, the monkey first turned to his emanation father, *Amitabha*, and asked him for advice. The “god of light from the West” answered him with wise foresight: “Take the rock demoness as your consort. Your children and grandchildren will multiply. When they have finally become humans, they will be a support to the teaching” (Hermanns, 1956, p. 32).

Nevertheless, this Buddhist evolutionary account, reminiscent of Charles Darwin, did not just arise from the compassionate gesture of a divine monkey; rather, it also contains a widely spread, elitist value judgement by the clergy, which lets the Tibetans and their country be depicted as uncivilized, underdeveloped and animal-like, at least as far as the negative influence of their primordial mother is concerned. “From their father they are hardworking, kind, and attracted to religious activity; from their mother they are quick-tempered, passionate, prone to jealousy and fond of play and meat”, an old text says of the inhabitants of the Land of Snows (Samuel, 1993, p. 222).

Two forces thus stand opposed to one another, right from the Tibetan genesis: the disciplined, restrained, culturally creative, spiritual world of the monks in the form of *Avalokiteshvara* and the wild, destructive energy of the feminine in the figure of *Srinmo*.

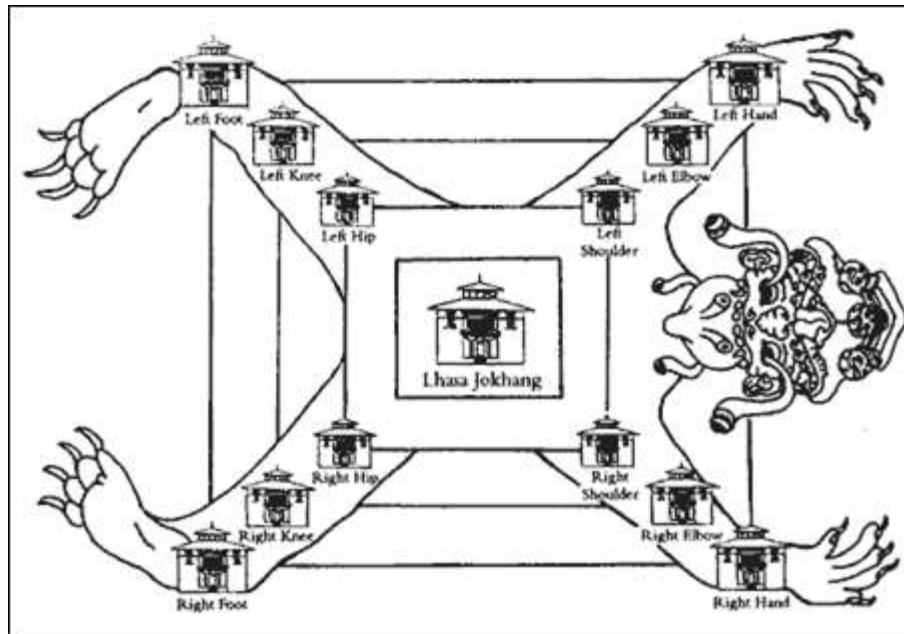
In a further myth, non-Buddhist Tibet itself appears as the embodiment of *Srinmo* (Janet Gyatso, 1989, p. 44). The local demoness is said to have resisted the introduction of the true teaching by the Buddhist missionaries from India with all means at her disposal, with weaponry and with magic, until she was ultimately defeated by the great king of law, Songtsen Gampo (617-650), an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* (and thus of the current Dalai Lama). “The lake in the Milk plane,” writes the Tibet researcher Rolf A. Stein, “where the first Buddhist king built his temple (the Jokhang), represented the heart of the demoness, who lay upon her back. The demoness is Tibet itself, which must first be tamed before she can be inhabited and civilized. Her body still covers the full extent of Tibet in the period of its greatest military expansion (eighth to ninth century C.E.). Her spread-eagled limbs reached to the limits of Tibetan settlement ... In order to keep the limbs of the defeated demoness under control, twelve nails of immobility were hammered into her” (Stein, 1993, p.34). A Buddhist temple was raised at the location of each of these twelve nailings.

Mysterious stories circulate among the Tibetans which tell of a lake of blood under the Jokhang, which is supposed to consist of *Srinmo*'s heart blood. Anyone who lays his ear to the ground in the cathedral, the sacred center of the Land of Snows, can still — many claim — hear her faint heartbeat. A comparison of this unfortunate female fate with the subjugation of the Greek dragon, *Python*, at Delphi immediately suggests itself. *Apollo*, the god of light (*Avalokiteshvara*), let the earth-monster, Python (*Srinmo*), live once he had defeated it so that it would prophesy for him, and built over the mistreated body at Delphi the most famous oracle temple in Greece.

The earth demoness is nailed down with *phurbas*. These are ritual daggers with a three-sided blade and a *vajra* handle. We know these already from the *Kalachakra* ritual, where they are likewise employed to fixate the earth spirits and the earth mother. The authors who have examined the symbolic significance of the magic weapon are unanimous in their assessment of the aggressive phallic symbolism of the *phurba*.

In their view, *Srinmo* represents an archetypal variant of the Mother Earth figure known from all cultures, whom the Greeks called Gaia (*Gaea*). As nature and as woman she stands in stark contrast to the purely spiritual world of Tantric Buddhism. The forces of wilderness, which rebel against androcentric civilization, are bundled within her. She forms the feminine shadow world in opposition to the masculine paradise of light of the shining *Amitabha* and his radiant emanation son, *Avalokiteshvara*. *Srinmo* symbolizes the (historical) *prima materia*, the matrix, the primordial earthly substance which is needed in order to construct a tantric monastic empire, then she provides the *gynergy*, the feminine *élan vitale*, with which the Land of Snows pulsates. As the vanquisher of the earth goddess, *Avalokiteshvara* triumphs in the form of King Songtsen Gampo, that is, the same Bodhisattva who, as a monkey, earlier engendered with *Srinmo* the Tibetans in myth, and who shall later exercise absolute dominion from the "Roof of the World" as Dalai Lama.

Tibet's sacred center, the Jokhang (the cathedral of Lhasa), the royal chronicles inform us, thus stands over the pierced heart of a woman, the earth mother *Srinmo*. This act of nailing down is repeated at the construction of every Lamaist shrine, whether temple or monastery and regardless of where the establishment takes place — in Tibet, India, or the West. Then before the first foundation stone for the new building is laid, the tantric priests occupy the chosen location and execute the ritual piercing of the earth mother with their *phurbas*. Tibet's holy geography is thus erected upon the maltreated bodies of mythic women, just as the tantric shrines of India (the *shakta pithas*) are found on the places where the dismembered body of the goddess *Sati* fell to earth.



*Srinmo with different Tibetan temples upon her body*

In contrast to her Babylonian sister, *Tiamat*, who was cut to pieces by her great-grandchild, *Marduk*, so that outer space was formed by her limbs, *Srinmo* remains alive following her subjugation and nailing down. According to the tantric scheme, her *gynergy* flows as a constant source of life for the Buddhocratic system. She thus vegetates — half dead, half alive — over centuries in the service of the patriarchal clergy. An interpretation of this process according to the criteria of the *gaia* thesis often discussed in recent years would certainly be most revealing. (We return to this point in our analysis of the ecological program of the Tibetans in exile.) According to this thesis, the mistreated “Mother Earth” (*Gaia* is the popular name for the Greek earth mother) has been exploited by humanity (and the gods?) for millennia and is bleeding to death. But *Srinmo* is not just a reservoir of inexhaustible energy. She is also the absolute Other, the foreign, and the great danger which threatens the Buddhocratic state. *Srinmo* is — as we still have to prove — the mythic “inner enemy” of Tibetan Lamaism, while the external mythic enemy is likewise represented by a woman, the Chinese goddess *Guanyin*.

*Srinmo* survived — even if it was under the most horrible circumstances, yet the Tibetans also have a myth of dismemberment which repeats the Babylonian tragedy of *Tiamat*. Like many peoples they worship the tortoise as a symbol of Mother Earth. A Tibetan myth tells of how in the mists of time the Bodhisattva *Manjushri* sacrificed such a creature “for the benefit of all beings”. In order to form a solid foundation for the world he fired an arrow off at the tortoise which struck it in the right-hand side. The wounded animal spat fire, its blood poured out, and it passed excrement. It thus multiplied the elements of the new world. Albert Grünwedel presents this myth as evidence for the “tantric female sacrifice” in the *Kalachakra* ritual: “The tortoise which *Manjushri* shot through with a long arrow ... [is] just another form of the world woman whose inner organs are depicted by the *dasakaro vasi* figure [the Power of Ten]” (Grünwedel, 1924, vol. II, p. 92).

The relation of Tibetan Buddhism to the goddess of the earth or of the country (Tibet) is also one of brutal subjugation, an imprisonment, an enslavement, a murder or a dismemberment. Euphemistically, and in ignorance of the tantric scheme of things it could also be interpreted as a civilizing of the wilderness through culture. Yet however the relation is perceived — no meeting, no exchange, no mutual recognition of the two forces takes place. In the depths of Tibet's history — as we shall show — a brutal battle of the sexes is played out.

### **Why women can't climb the pure crystal mountain**

Even the landscape is sexualized in Tibetan folk beliefs (this too squares with the ideas of Tantrism). In mountain lakes, the water of which has taken on a red color (probably because of mercury), the lamas see the menstrual blood of the goddess *Vajravarahi*. In rivers, lakes, and springs dwell the *Lu*, who resemble our nixies. They are hostile towards we humans, yet they were nonetheless preferred as spouses by the kings of the highlands in ancient times and brought their magic abilities with them in the marriage. We learn from the Fifth Dalai Lama that they leave no corpse behind when they die.

The myths have also divided the massive snow capped peaks along sexual lines. It was hence not uncommon for particular mountains to marry and the descendants of such alliances are supposed to have grounded powerful royal houses. One of the mountain goddesses is world famous, because it rises above the other peaks of the planet as the highest mountain of all. We know her under the name of Mount Everest, the Himalayan peoples, however, pray to her as the "Mother of the Earth", the "White Heavens Goddess", the "White Glacier Lady", the "Goddess of the Winds", the "Lady of Long Life", the "Elephant Goddess".

In his study with the descriptive title of *Why can't women climb pure crystal mountain?*, the Tibet researcher Toni Huber describes an interesting mythic case where a mountain goddess was deprived of her power by a tantric Siddha and since then the location of her former rule may no longer be visited by women. The case concerns the Tsari, a mountain which was the seat of a powerful female deity in pre-Buddhist times. She was defeated by a yogi in the twelfth century. The brutal battle between her and the *vajra* master displays clear traits of a tantric performance. As the yogi entered the region under her control, the goddess let a series of vaginas appear by magical manipulation so as to seduce her challenger, yet the latter succeeded in warding off the magic through a brutal act of subjugation. As she then, lying on the ground, showed herself willing to sleep with her conqueror, she was at first rejected on the grounds that she was of the female sex (!). But after a while the yogi accepted her as a wisdom consort and took away all her magic powers once they had united sexually (Huber, 1994, p. 352).

From this point in time on, Tsari, which was among the most holy mountains of the highlands, became taboo for women, both for Buddhist nuns and for laity. This ban has remained in force

until modern times. Groups of pilgrims who visited the mountain in the eighties sent their women back in advance. Toni Huber questioned several lamas about the significance of this misogynist custom. The majority of answers made reference to the “purity of the location” which in the view of the monks formed a geographic mandala: “Because it is such a pure abode, .... women are not allowed. ... The only reason is that women are of inferior birth and impure. There are many powerful mandalas on the mountain that are divine and pure, and women are polluting” (Huber, 1994, p. 356).

But there was also another justification for the exclusion of the female pilgrims which likewise shows how and with what presumption the androcentric power elite of the land seized possession of the formerly feminine geography: “The reason why women can't go up there is that at Tsari are lots of small, self-produced manifestations of the Buddha genitals made of stone. If you look at them they just appear ordinary, but they are actually miraculous phalluses of the Buddha, so if women go there these miracles would become spoiled by their presence, and the women would get many problems also. They would get sick and perhaps die prematurely. It is generally harmful for their health so that is why they stopped women going to the holy place in the past, for their own benefit. The problem is that women are low and dirty, thus they are too impure to go there” (Huber, 1994, p. 357). It is no wonder that in feminist circles the future climbing of Tsari by a woman and its “re-conquest” has become a symbol for female resistance against patriarchal Lamaism.

### **Matriarchy in the Land of Snows?**

Siegbert Hummel sees remnants of a long lost maternal cult in the Tibetan female mountain deities and their attributes. These could have already reached India and the Tibetan plateau from Mediterranean regions in the late stone age (from 4000 B.C.E.). It is a matter of one of the two contrary cultural currents, which may have embedded themselves deeply in the Tibetan popular psyche thousands of years ago: “The first is lunar in character and could be connected with the Tibetan megalithic. ... Its world view is triadic, exhibits chthonic, demonic and phallicist tendencies, snake and tree cults, as well as the worship of maternal deities ... The other component is markedly solar, dualist and heaven-related, primarily nomadic. Shamanist elements, probably from an earlier solar, hunting basis, are numerous” (Hummel, 1954, p. 128).

In that he nominates the sexual discord which has kept the civilizations of the Land of Snows in suspense since the earliest times, Hummel speaks here with the vocabulary of Tantrism, probably without knowing it. In his view then, the two heavenly orbs of moon and sun already stood opposed as two polar, culture-shaping forces in pre-Buddhist Tibet. Following the solar Bon cult Tantric Buddhism has taken over the sunly role since the eighth century. In contrast, the moon cults have been — the myth of the nailing down of *Srinmo* teaches us — overthrown by the sun warriors.

According to Hummel the lunar and solar cultural currents are graphically demonstrated in the very popular *garuda* motif in Tibetan art. The *garuda* is a mythical sun-bird. Not infrequently it holds in its beak a snake, which must be assigned to the lunar, matriarchal world. There was thus a fundamental clash between the two cultures: "Since the *garuda* is thereby understood as an enemy of the snakes, it seems natural to suspect that there where the snake-killing *garuda* arose, the lunar and solar cultures encountered and opposed one another as enemies" Hummel writes (Hummel, 1954, p. 101).

There are in fact numerous historically demonstrable matriarchal elements in the old Tibetan culture. In this connection there are the still unexplained and mysterious stone circles which have been brought into connection with matriarchal cults and were already discovered by Sven Hedin on his research trips. In contrast, numerous prehistoric shrines found in caves offer us less ambiguous information. It has been clearly proven that female deities were worshipped at these chthonic sites. In this century such caves were still considered as birth channels and a visit to them was seen as an initiation and hence as a rebirth (Stein, 1988, pp. 2-4).

A further secret concerns the mythic female kingdoms which are supposed to have existed in Tibet — one in the West, another in the East, and the third in the North of the Land of Snows. The in part detailed reports about these stem from Chinese sources and may be traced back to the seventh century C.E. We learn that these realms, depicted as being very powerful, were ruled by queens who had command over a tribal council of women (Chayet, 1993, p. 51). When they died several members of court voluntarily joined the female rulers in death. The female nobles had male servants, and women were the head of the family. A child inherited its mother's name.

On one of his first expeditions to Tibet, Ernst Schäfer encountered a matriarchal tribe who distinguished themselves through their cruelty. In his book, *Unter Räubern in Tibet* [Among Robbers in Tibet], he reports: "As we learn in Dju-Gompa, primitive matriarchy is still practiced by the wild Ngoloks. A great queen, Adjung de Jogo by name, reigns autocratically over the six main tribes that are governed by princes. As the reincarnation of a heavenly being she enjoys divine honors and at the same time is the spouse of all her tribal princes on earth. She rules with a strong hand, is pretty and clever, possesses a bodyguard of seven thousand warriors, and handles a gun like a man. Once a year Adjung de Jogo proceeds up the God-mountain with her seven thousand men in a grand procession in order to meditate in the glacial isolation before she returns to the black tents of her mobile residence.

It is not just about the intrepid courage of the Ngoloks but also their cruelty that people tell the most terrible stories. Of all the Tibetan tribes they are supposed to have figured out the most ingenious ways of despatching their victims off to join their ancestors. Chopping off hands and splitting skulls are minor things; they can be left to the others! But sewing [people] up in fresh yak skins and letting them roast in the sun — disemboweling while alive, or launching the entrails skywards on bent rods, these are the methods that are loved in Ngolokland.

At nearly all times of the year, but especially in early fall when the marshes are dried out and the animals are best nourished, the Ngoloks undertake their large-scale plundering raids to as far as Barum-Tsaidam in the north, Sungpan in the south, and Dju-Gompa in the West. Even for Chinese merchants they are the epitome of all the terrible things that are said of the “Western barbarian country” in the Middle Kingdom. (Schäfer, 1952, pp. 164-165)

In the nineteen fifties, to the south of Bhutan a matriarchally organized tribe by the name of “Garo” still existed, the members of which were convinced that they had emigrated from a province in Tibet in prehistoric times (Bertrand, 1957, p. 41). We may also recall that in the *Shambhala* travel books of the Third Panchen Lama there is talk of regions in which only women live.

It would certainly be somewhat hasty to conclude the existence of a matriarchy across the whole Himalayas solely on the basis of the material at hand. But at any rate, the male imagination has for centuries painted the inaccessible highlands as a region under the control of female tribes and their queens.

### **The western imagination**

As early as the thirteenth century the myth of the Tibetan female kingdoms had reached Europe. Speculation about this have had a hold upon western travelers up until the present day. Likewise noteworthy is the frequent allegorical connection of Tibet to something enigmatically feminine, that is, a western imagining which is congruent with the traditional Tibetan conception. Since the nineteenth century European researchers, mountain climbers, and followers of the esoteric have enthused about the Land of Snows as if it were a woman who ought to be conquered, whose veil should be lifted, and into whose secrets one wished to “penetrate”. The Tibet researcher, Peter Bishop, has devoted a detailed study to this occidental fantasy (Bishop, 1993, p. 36).

Probably the most absurd depiction of a western encounter with the “Great Mother Tibet” can be found in the travel report of the Englishman, Harrison Forman, from the nineteen thirties. To offer the reader some amusement, but above all to show how strongly the culture of the Land of Snows can over-stimulate the masculine fantasy of a westerner, we would like to present one of Forman’s lively recounted experiences in detail.

The Briton had heard of the Abbess Alakh Gong Rri Tsang (Krisang), a living “female Buddha” who aroused his curiosity immensely. He visited her convent and was given a most friendly reception. During a tour he asked about a mysterious grotto, the entrance to which could be seen on a mountainside. The Abbess gave him a sharp look and announced she was prepared to show

him the “shrine”. In that moment Forman felt a painful bout of nausea, but was nonetheless prepared to follow. Thus, after a difficult climb, they both — he and the Abbess — reached the grotto. Alakh Gong Krisang lit two torches and they entered the cave. They were met by a thick darkness, a musty smell, and dancing shadows. Squeaking bats fluttered through the stale air. The ghastly ambience made the Briton nervous and he asked himself, “A thought struck me. Good Lord! Just what was this woman Living Buddha? Reason struggled with emotion. This was Tibet, where millions believed in ever present evil spirits and their capriciousness” (Forman, 1936, p. 179).

Without looking back, and with a firm footstep, the Abbess proceeded further into the grotto. „Do not be afraid, my friend!”, she calmed Forman. They progressed deeper and deeper through passages filled with stalactites and stalagmites. Then they came to a space in the center of which four pyramids of human bones rose up, with a golden statue in the middle of them. The Abbess smiled as if in a “hysterical ecstasy”, writes Forman. Immobile, she stared at the golden sculpture.



***Alakh Gong Rri Tsang, the woman Grand Buddha of Druk Kurr Gomba***

And now we should let the author speak for himself: „And as I watched her, my jaw dropped. I stared as she began to disrobe. A shrug of the shoulders her and her long toga slipped to the floor. Then she loosened the silken girdle at her waist and let drop the voluminous skirt-like garment. Her other garments followed, one by one, until they formed a red pile at her feet. And I saw, what I am sure no white man ever saw before me, or ever will see again, the nude body of Alakh Gong Rri Tsang, the woman Grand Buddha of Druk Kurr Gomba. Her body was amazingly voluptuous, and, I suppose, beautiful. Her breasts stood like those of a schoolgirl, firm and round – like hemispheres of pure alabaster. Her figure was magnificent and of sinuously generous proportions. I was minded of the substantial nudes of Michelangelo and his school. And amid the ever-encircling bats she stood there – still gazing ecstatically upward” (Forman, 1936, p. 183). If we examine the photo which Forman took of the Abbess in the convent and in which she is not to be distinguished from a portly male Abbot, one is indeed most amazed at just what is supposed to be hidden beneath the clothes of the Living Buddha.

But there is better to come: „The bats had suddenly settled on her - like vultures to a feast. In a moment she was covered from head to foot. Like lustful vampires they sank their horrible libidinous beaks into her flesh and the blood began to flow from a hundred wounds” (Forman, 1936, pp. 183, 184). Forman turned to stone, but then — even in the most hopeless of situations a gentleman — he came to his senses, and began to shoot madly at the bloodsuckers with his revolver. He emptied more than seven magazines before the Abbess, to his great astonishment asked him with a smile to calm down. With a majestic gesture she reanimated the bats which he had killed. There was not the slightest trace of a wound to be seen on her body any more. „And in that moment”, Forman reports further, „had she been the loveliest woman in all the world [...] Nothing remained of the grisly scene of a few moments before to prove to me that it had ever happened at all, save the nude woman and the solid golden idol with its four guardian pyramids of human bones. Somewhere off in the blackness I could still hear faintly the obscene screaming of the hordes of bats” (Forman, 1936, p. 185). As they left the grotto, Forman commented upon the incident — typically British — with the lapidary words: „It must be the altitude!” (Forman, 1936, p. 186).

As absurd as this story may seem, it nonetheless quite exactly hits the visual world which dominates the tantric milieu, and it in no way exaggerates the often still more fantastic reports which we know from the lives of famous yogis.

### **Women in former Tibetan society**

How then is the fate of Srinmo expressed in Tibetan society? We would like to present the social role of women in old Tibet in a very condensed manner, without considering events since the Chinese occupation or the situation among the Tibetans in exile here. Their role was very specific and can best be outlined by saying that, precisely because of her inferiority the Tibetan woman enjoyed a certain amount of freedom. Fundamentally women were considered inferior creatures. Appropriately, the Tibetan word for woman can be literally translated as “lowly born”. Man, in contrast, means “being of higher birth” (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 76). A prayer found widely among the women of Tibet pleads, “may I reject a feminine body and be reborn [in] a male one” (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 19). The birth of a girl brought bad luck, that of a son promised happiness and prosperity.

The institution of marriage itself is definitely not one of the Buddhist virtues – the historical Buddha himself traded married life for the rough life of a pilgrim. To be blessed with children was, because of the curse which rebirth brought with it, something of a burden. Shakyamuni thus fled his father’s palace directly following the birth of his son, Rahula. With unmistakable and decisive words, Padmasambhava also expressed this anti-family sentiment: „When practicing the Dharma of liberation, to be married and lead a family life is like being restraint in tight chains with no freedom. You may wish to flee, but you have been caught in the dungeon of samsara with no escape. You may later regret it, but you have sunk into the mire of emotions, with no getting out. If you have

children, they may be lovely but they are the stake that ties you to samsara" (Binder-Schmidt, 1994, p. 131).

According to the dominant teaching, women could not achieve enlightenment, and were thus considered underdeveloped. A reincarnation as a female being was regarded as a punishment. The consequence of all these weaknesses, inabilities and inferiorities was that the patriarchal monastic society paid little attention to the lives of women. They were left, so to speak, to do what they wanted. Family life was also not subject to strict rules. Marriages were solemnized without many formalities and could be dissolved by mutual consent without consulting an official institution. This disinterest of the clergy led, as we said, to a certain independence among the women of Tibet, often exaggerated by sensation-hungry western travelers. Extramarital relationships were common, especially with servants. A wife nevertheless had to remain faithful, otherwise the husband had the right to cut off her nose. Of course such privileges did not exist in the reverse situation.

The much talked about polyandry, discussed with fascination by western ethnologists, was also less of an emancipatory phenomenon than an economical necessity. A wife served two men because this spared the money for a further woman. Naturally, twice the work was expected of her. Male members of the upper strata tended in contrast toward polygyny and maintained several wives. This became quite a status symbol and having more than one wife was consequently forbidden for the lower classes. In the absence of cash, a husband could pay his debts by letting his creditors take his wife. We know of no cases of the reverse.

A liberal attitude towards women on behalf of the clergy arises out of Tantrism. Since the lamas were generally viewed to be higher entities, women and girls never resisted the wishes of the embodied deities. The Austrian, Heinrich Harrer, was amazed at the sexual freedom found in the monasteries. Likewise, the Japanese monk, Kawaguchi Eikai, wondered on his journey through Tibet about „the great beauty possessed by the young consorts of aged abbots" (quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 80). A proportion of the female tantric partners may have earned a living as prostitutes after they had finished serving as *mudras*. There were many of these in the towns, and hence a saying arose according to which as many whores filled the streets of Lhasa as dogs.

But there was a married priesthood in Tibet. For members of a monastery the relaxation of the oath of celibacy was nonetheless considered an exception. These married lamas and their women primarily performed "pastoral" work in the villages. As far as we can determine, in such cases the wife was only very rarely the tantric wisdom consort of her husband. In the Sakyapa sect the great abbots were married and had children. A proper dynasty grew up out of their families. We know of precisely these powerful hierarchs that they made use not of their wives but rather of virgin girls (*kumaris*) for their rites.

The “freedom” of the Tibetan women was null and void as soon as sacred boundaries were crossed — for example the gates of the monastery, which remained closed to them. Only during the great annual festivals were they sometimes invited, but they were never permitted to participate actively in the performances. In the official mystery plays the roles of goddesses or dakinis were exclusively performed by men. Even the poultry which clucked around in the Dalai Lama’s gardens consisted solely of roosters, since hens would have corrupted the holy grounds with their feminine radiation. A woman was never allowed to touch the possessions of a lama.

The Tibetan nuns do admittedly take part in certain rites, but have in all much more circumscribed lives than those of lay women. Did not the historical Buddha himself say that they stood in the way of the development of the teaching, and long hesitate before ordaining women? He was convinced that the “daughters of Mara” would accelerate the downfall of Buddhism, even if they let their heads be shaved. Still today the rules prescribe that a nun owes the lowliest monk the greatest respect, whilst the reverse does not apply in any sense. Rather than being praised for her pious decision to lead a life in a convent, she is abused for being incapable of building up an orderly family life. Despite all these degradations, to which there have been no essential changes up to the present, the nuns have, without concern for life and limb, stood at the head of the emergent protest movement in Tibet since 1987.

### **The alchemic division of the feminine: The Tibetan goddesses Palden Lhamo and Tara**

In our explanation of Buddhist Tantrism we repeatedly mentioned the division of the feminine into a gloomy, repellant, and aggressive aspect and a bright, attractive, and mild one. The terrifying and cruel dakini is counterpointed by the sweet and blessing-giving “sky walker”. Femininity vacillates between these two extremes (the Madonna and the whore) and can be kept under control because of this inner turmoil. In the same context, we drew attention to parallels to Indian and European alchemy, where the dark part is described as the *prima materia* and the bright as the feminine elixir (*gynergy*) yearned for by the adept. Does such a splitting of the feminine also find expression in the mythical history of the Land of Snows?

#### ***Palden Lhamo — The Dalai Lama’s protective goddess***

A monumental dark and wrathful mother *par excellence* is *Palden Lhamo*, who, like her “sister” *Srinmo*, was a wild, free matriarch in pre-Buddhist times, but then, brought under control by a *vajra* master, began to serve the “true doctrine” — but in contrast to *Srinmo* she does so actively. She is the protective deity of the Dalai Lama, the whole country, and its capital, Lhasa. This grants her an exceptionally high position in the Tibetan pantheon. The Fifth Dalai Lama was one of her greatest worshippers, the goddess is supposed to have appeared to him several times in person; she was his political advisor and confidante (Karmay, 1988, p. 35). One of her many names, which evoke both her martial and her tantric character, is „Great Warrior Deity, the Powerful Mother of the World of the Joys of the Senses” (Richardson, 1993, p. 87). After the “Great Fifth” had repeatedly recited her mantra for a while, he dreamt “that the ghost spirits in China [were] being

subdued” (Karmay, 1988, p. 35). Since then she has been considered to be one of the chief enemies of Beijing.

In examining a portrait of her, one becomes convinced that *Palden Lhamo* would be among the most repulsive figures in a worldwide gallery of demons. With gnashing teeth, bulging eyes and a filthy blue body, she rides upon a wild mule. Beneath its hooves spreads a sea of blood which has flowed from the veins of her slaughtered enemies. Severed arms, heads, legs, eyes and entrails float around in it. The mule’s saddle is made from the leather of a skinned human. That would be repulsive enough! But the horror overcomes one when one discovers that it is the skin of her own (!) son, who was killed by the goddess when he refused to follow her example and adopt the Buddhist faith. In her right hand *Palden Lhamo* swings a club in the form of a child’s skeleton. Some interpreters of this scene claim that this is also the remains of her son. With her left hand the fiendess holds a skull bowl filled with human blood to her lips. Poisonous snakes are entwined all around her. [1]

Like the Indian goddess, *Kali*, she appears with a loud retinue. One can encounter her of a night on charnel fields together with her noisy flock. Just what unbridled aggression this army of female ghosts kindled in the imaginations of the monks is best shown by a poem which the lamas of the Drepung monastery sing in honor of their protective lady, *Dorje Dragmogyel*, who is one of *Palden Lhamo*’s horde:

You glorious Dorje Dragmogyel ...

When you are angry at your enemies,

Then you ride upon a fiery ball of lightning.

A cloud of flames — like that at the end of all time -

Pours from your mouth,

Smoke streams from your nose,

Pillars of fire follow you.

Hurriedly you collect clouds from the firmament,

The rumble of thunder pierces

through the ten regions of the world.

A dreadful rain of meteors

and huge hailstones hurtles down,  
And the Earth is flooded in fire and water.  
Devilish birds and owls whirl around,  
Black birds with yellow beaks float past,  
one after another.  
The circle of Mnemo goddesses spins,  
The war hordes of the demons throng  
And the steeds of the tsen spirits race galloping away.  
When you are happy,  
then the ocean beats against the sky.  
If rage fills you, then the sun and moon fall,  
If you laugh, the world mountain collapses into dust ....  
You and your companions  
Defeat all who would harm the Buddhist teaching,  
And who try to disrupt the life of the monastic community.  
Wound all those of evil intent,  
And especially protect our monastery,  
this holy place ....  
You should not wait years and months,  
drink now the warm heart's blood of the enemies,  
and exterminate them in the blink of an eye.

(Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, 34)

In our presentation of the tantric ritual we showed how the terror goddesses or dakinis, whatever form they may assume, must be brought under control by the yogi. Once subjugated, they serve the patriarchal monastic state as the destroyers of enemies. Hence, to repeat, the *vajra* master is

— when he encounters the dark mother — not interested in transforming her aggression, but rather much more in setting her to work as a deadly weapon against attackers and non-Buddhists. In the final instance, however — the tantras teach us- the feminine has no independent existence, even when appears in its wrathful form. In this respect *Palden Lhamo* is nothing more than one of the many masks of *Avalokiteshvara*, or — hence -of the Dalai Lama himself.

We know of an astonishing parallel to this from the kingdom of the pharaohs. The ancient Egyptians personified the wrath of the male king as a female figure. This was known as *Sachmet*, the flaming goddess of justice with the face of a lioness (Assmann, 1991, p. 89). Since the rulers were also obliged to reign with leniency as well as justly wrath, *Sachmet* had a softer sister, the cat goddess *Bastet*. This goddess was also a characteristic of the king pictured in female form. Correspondingly, in Tibetan Buddhism the mild sister of the *Palden Lhamo* is the divine *Tara*.

Even if the dreadful demoness is in the final instance an imagining of the Dalai, this does not mean that this projection cannot become independent and one day tear herself free of him, assume her own independent form and then hit back at her hated “projection father” as an enemy. Such radical “emancipations” of Tibetan protective deities are not at all rare and the collected histories of Tibet are full of reports, where submissive servants of the lamas free themselves and attempt to revolt against their lords. Right now, the Tibetan exile community is being deeply shaken by such a rebellious protective spirit by the name of *Dorje Shugden*, who has at any rate managed to disfigure the until now completely pure image of the *Kundun* in the West with some most persistent stains. We shall return to report on this often. From *Shugden* circles also comes the suspicion that *Palden Lhamo* has failed completely as the spiritual protector of Tibet, Lhasa, and the Dalai Lama, and has delivered the country into the hands of the Chinese occupiers. Whatever opinion one may have of such speculations, the extreme aggression of the demoness and the practical political facts do not exclude such a view of the matter.

In the life story of *Palden Lhamo* her relationship to her son is particularly cruel and numinous. Why a woman who is revered as the supreme protective spirit of Tibet and the Dalai Lama must be the slaughterer of her own child, may seem monstrous even to one who has become accustomed to the atrocities of the tantras. If we interpret the case psychologically we must ask ourselves the following questions: As a mother, is *Palden Lhamo* not driven by constant horror? Is her bottomless hate not the expression of her abominable deed? Must she not in her heart be the arch-enemy of Buddhism, the cause of her infanticide?

Is this repellant cult even more murderous than it already appears? Is the goddess perhaps offered sacrifices which simultaneously appease and captivate her? Since the demoness had to slaughter the utmost which a mother can give, namely her child, for Tibetan Buddhism, the sacrifice which is to fill her with satisfaction must also be the highest which Lamaism has to offer.

In fact, the early deaths of the Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Dalai Lama give rise to the question of whether a deliberately initiated sacrificial offering to *Palden Lhamo* could be involved here? All four god-kings died at an age before they were able to take over the business of government. In each case, the regents who were exercising real power until the new Dalai Lamas came of age were suspected with good reason of being the murderer. In the Tibet of old poisonings were a regular occurrence. There is even said to have been a morbid belief that whoever poisoned a highly respected man would obtain all the happiness and privileges of his victim.

These are the historical facts. But there is a mysterious event to be found in the brief biographies of the four unhappy “god-kings” which could lend their fate a deeper, symbolic meaning. We mean the visit to a temple about a hundred miles southeast of Lhasa which was dedicated to one of the emanations of *Palden Lhamo*. We must imagine such shrines (*gokhangs*), dedicated to the wrathful deities, to be a real cabinet of horrors. Stuffed full of real and magic weapons, padded out by all manner of dried human body parts, they aroused absolute repugnance among visitors from the West.

In order to test the psychological hardiness of the young *Kunduns*, at least once in their lives the children were locked in the morbid temple mentioned and probably exposed to the most terrible performances of the goddess. “Young as they were, they had insufficient knowledge to persuade her to turn away the wrath, which came so easily to her, and, accordingly, they died soon after the meeting”, Charles Bell wrote of this cruel rite of initiation (Bell, 1994, p. 159). Whatever may have taken place within this *gokhang*, the children emerged from this hell completely disturbed and were all four close to madness.

The lot of the young Twelfth was particularly tragic. His chamberlain, one of his few intimates, was caught thieving from the Potala on a large scale. He fled upon discovery of the deed, was caught up with, and killed. The body was strapped astride a horse as if it were alive. The dead man was thus led before the young *Kundun*. Before the eyes of the fifteen year old, the head, hands and feet of the wrongdoer were struck off and the trunk was tossed into a field. The god-king was so horrified by the spectacle of the body of his “best friend” that he no longer wanted to see anyone at all any more and sought refuge in speechlessness. Nevertheless, the visit to the horrifying temple of *Palden Lhamo* was still expected of him afterwards. In contrast the “Great Thirteenth” did not visit the shrine of the demoness before he was 25 years old and came away unscathed. Even the Chinese were amazed at this. We do not know if the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has ever set foot in the shrine.

If one pursues a Tibetan/tantric logic, it naturally makes sense to interpret the premature deaths of the four Dalai Lamas as sacrifices to *Palden Lhamo*, since according to tradition it is necessary to constantly palliate the terror gods with blood and flesh. The demoness’s extreme cruelty is beyond doubt, and that she desires the sacrifice of boys is revealing of her own tragic history. Incidentally, the slaughter of her son may be an indicator of an originally matriarchal sacrificial

cult which the Buddhists integrated into their own system. For example, the researcher A. H. Francke has discovered rock inscriptions in Tibet which refer to human sacrifices to the great goddess (Francke, 1914, p. 21). But it could also— in light of the tantric methods — be that *Palden Lhamo*, converted to Buddhism not from conviction but because she was magically forced to the ground, was compelled by her new lords to murder her son and that she revenged herself through the killings of the young Dalai Lamas.

Even an apparently paradoxical interpretation is possible: as a female, the demoness stands in radical confrontation to the doctrine of *Vajrayana*, and she may have sold her loyalty and subjugation for the highest possible price, namely that of the sacrifice of the god-kings. Such sadomasochist satisfactions can only be understood from within the tantric scheme, but there they are — as we know — not at all seldom. Hence, if one set a limit on the sacrifice of the boys in terms of time and headcount, then they may have been of benefit to later incarnations of the god-king, specifically, that is, to the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Dalai Lamas. The exceptionally long reign of the last two *Kunduns* would, according to tantric logic, support such an interpretation.

### **Tara —Tibet's Madonna**

In the mytho-historical pantheon of Tibetan Buddhism, the gentle goddess *Tara* represents the exact counterimage of the terrible *Palden Lhamo*. *Tara* is — in the words of European alchemy — the “white virgin”, the ethereal-feminine supreme source of inspiration for the adept. In precisely this sense she represents the positive feminine counterpart to the destructive *Palden Lhamo*, or hence to the earth mother, *Srinmo*. The divided image of femininity found in every phase of Indian religious history thus lives on in Tibetan culture. “Witch” and “Madonna” are the two feminine archetypes which have for centuries dominated and continue to dominate the patriarchal imagination of Tibet just like that of the west. If all the negative attributes of the feminine are collected in the witch, then all the positive ones are concentrated within the Madonna.

The *Tara* cult is probably fairly recent. Although legends recount that the worship of the goddess was brought to the Land of Snows in the seventh century by one of the women of the Tibetan king, Songtsen Gampo, it is historically more likely that the Indian scholar Atisha first introduced the cult in the eleventh century.

Unlike the many repellant demonic gods who attack the tormented Tibetans, *Tara* has become a place of refuge. Under her, the believers can cultivate their noble sentiments. She grants devotion, love, faith, and hope to those who call upon her. She exhibits all the characteristics of a merciful mother. She appears to people in dreams as a guardian angel. She takes care of all private interests and needs. She can be trusted with one's cares. She helps against poisonings, heals illnesses and cures obsessions. But she is also the right one to turn to for success in business and politics. Everyone prays to her as a “redemptress”. In translation her name means “star” or “star of hope”. It can be said that outside of the monasteries she is the most worshipped divinity

of the Land of Snows. There is barely a household in Tibet in which a small statue of *Tara* cannot be found.

A number of colors are assigned to her various appearances. There is a white, green, yellow, blue, even a black *Tara*. She often holds a lotus with 16 petals which is supposed to indicate that she is sixteen years old. Her body is adorned with the most beautiful jewels. In a royal seated posture she looks down mildly upon those who ask pity of her. Naturally, one gains the impression that she is not suitable for tantric sexual practices. The whole positive aspect of the motherly appears to have been concentrated within her. She is experienced by Europeans as a Madonna untouched by sexuality. This is, however, not the case, then in contrast to her occidental sister with whom she otherwise has so much in common, the white *Tara* is also a wisdom consort. [2]

Sometimes, as is also known of the European worship of Mary, her cult tips over into an undesirable (for the clergy, that is) expansion of the goddess's power which could pose a danger to the patriarchal system. *Tara* is known, for example, as the "Mother of all Buddhas". A legend in which she refuses to appear as a man is also in circulation and is often cited these days: when she was asked by some monks whether she did not prefer a male body, she is said to have answered: "Since there is no such thing as a 'man' or a 'woman', this bondage to male and female is hollow. ... Those who wish to attain supreme enlightenment in a man's body are many, but those who wish to serve the aims of beings in a woman's body are few; therefore may I, until the world is emptied out, serve the aim of beings with nothing but the body of a woman" (Beyer, 1978, p. 65). Such statements are downright revolutionary and are in direct contradiction to the dominant doctrine that women cannot attain any enlightenment at all, but must first be reborn in a male body.

Tantric Buddhism's first protective measure against the potential feminine superiority of *Tara* is the story of her origin. Firstly, she does not have the status of a Buddha, but is only a female Bodhisattva. Her head is adorned by a small statue of *Amitabha*, an indicator that she is subject to the Highest Lord of the Light (who allows no women into his paradise) and is considered to be one of his emanations.

Furthermore, *Tara* is nothing more or less than the personified tears of *Avalokiteshvara*. One day as he looked down filled with compassion upon all suffering beings he had to weep. The tear from his left eye became the green *Tara*, that which flowed from his right became her white form. Even if, as according to some tantric schools, *Chenrezi* selects both *Taras* as wisdom consorts, they nevertheless remain his creation. He gave birth to them as androgyne, as "father-mother".



*Green Tara*

An even cleverer taming of the goddess consists in the fact that she incarnates in the bodies of men. Countless monks have chosen *Tara* as their yiddam and then visualize themselves as the goddess in their meditative practices. “Always in all practices, he must visualize himself as the Holy Lady, bearing in mind that the appearance is the deity, that his speech is her mantra, and that his memory and mental constructs are her knowledge” (Beyer, 1978, p. 465). Her role as the “mother of all Buddhas” is also taken on by the male meditators, who thus say the following words: “[I am] the mother who gives birth to the Conquerors and their sons; I possess all her body, speech, mind, qualities, and active functions” (Beyer, 1978, p. 449). In one of his works, Albert Grünwedel reproduces the portrait of a high-ranking Mongolian lama who is revered as an incarnation of *Tara*. Even modern western followers of Buddhism would like to see the Sixteenth Karmapa as the green *Tara*.

Like *Palden Lhamo*, *Tara* also plays a role in Tibetan *realpolitik*, then the latter is — in their own view — played out by gods, not human agents. Hence, the official opinion from out of the Potala was that the Russian Czars were supposed to be an embodiment of *Tara*. Such image

transferences are naturally very well suited to exciting the global power fantasies of the lamas. Then, since the goddess arose from a tear of *Avalokiteshvara*, the Czar as *Tara* must also be a product of the Dalai Lama, the highest living incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*. Further to this there is the idea derived from the tantras that the Czar (and thus Russia) as *Tara* could be coerced via a sexual magic act. This appears downright fantastic, but — as we know — the tantra master does use his *karma mudra* as symbols for the elements, planets, and also for countries.

In the nineteenth century the idea likewise arose that the British Queen, Victoria, was a reincarnation of *Tara*, yet on occasion *Palden Lhamo* was also nominated as being the goddess functioning behind the facade of the English Queen. It was thus more natural for the Dalai Lama to cooperate with the British or the Russians — since the Chinese had been possessed for centuries by a “nine-headed demoness” with whom it was impossible to reach an accord. The China-friendly Panchen Lama, however, saw this differently. For him, the Chinese Emperors of the Manchu dynasty, who professed to the Buddhist faith, were incarnations of the Bodhisattva, *Manjushri*, and could thus be considered as acceptable negotiators.

### Tara and Mary

A comparison of the Tibetan *Tara* with the Christian figure of *Mary* has by now become a commonplace in Buddhist circles. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama also makes liberal use of this cultural parallel with pious emotionalism. For the “yellow pontiff” *Mary* represents the *inana mudra* (the “imagined female”) so to speak of Catholicism. „Whenever I see an image of Mary,” — the *Kundun* has said — „I feel that she represents love and compassion. She is like a symbol of love. Within Buddhist iconography, the goddess *Tara* occupies a similar position” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1996c, p. 83). Not all that long ago, the „god-king” undertook a pilgrimage to Lourdes and afterwards summarized his impressions of the greatest Catholic shrine to Mary with the following moving words. „There — in front of the cave — I experienced something very special. I felt a spiritual vibration, a kind of spiritual presence there. And then in front of the image of the Virgin Mary, I prayed” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1996 c, p. 84).

The autobiographical book with the title of *Longing for Darkness: Tara and the Black Madonna* by the American, China Galland, reports on the attempt to incorporate the Catholic cult of *Mary* via the Tibetan cult of *Tara*. After the author’s second marriage failed, she returned to the Catholic Church and devoted herself to an excessive Mary worship with feministic undertones. The latter was the reason why Galland felt herself attracted above all to the black Madonnas worshipped in Catholicism. The “Black Virgin” has already been worshipped for years by feminists as an apocryphal mother deity.

One day the author encountered the Tibetan goddess, *Tara*, and the American was instantly fascinated. *Tara* struck her as a pioneer of “spiritual” women’s rights. The goddess had — this author believed — proclaimed that contrary to Buddhist doctrine enlightenment could also be attained in a female body. The author felt herself especially attracted to figure of the “green *Tara*”,

whom she equates with the black *Kali* of Hinduism at one point in her book: "The darkness of this female gods comforted me. I felt like a balm on the wound of the unending white maleness that we had deified in the West. They were the other side of everything I had ever known about God. A dark female God. Oh yes!" (Galland, 1990, p. 31).

In Galland we are thus dealing with a spiritual feminist who has rediscovered her original black mother and is seeking traces of her in every culture. In the Buddhist *Tara* cult this author thus also sees archetypal references to the many-breasted *Artemis* of Ephesus, to the Egyptian *Isis*, to the Phoenician *Alma Mater*, *Cybele*, to the Mesopotamian goddess of the underworld, *Ishtar*. Once more her trail leads from the dark *Tara* to the "black Madonnas" of Europe and America. From there the next link in the chain is the Indian terror goddess *Kali* (or *Durga*). "Was the blackness of the virgin a connecting thread of connection to *Tara*, *Kali* or *Durga*, or was it a mere coincidence?" asks Galland (Galland, 1990, p. 50). For her it was no coincidence!

With one word Galland activates the gynocentric world view which is familiar enough from the feminist literature. She sees the great goddess at work everywhere (Galland, 1993, p. 42). The universal position which she grants herself as the first creative principle is depicted unambiguously in a poem. The author found it in a Gnostic Christian text. There a female power, who sounds "more like *Kali* than the Mother of God", says the following words:

*For I am the first and the last.*

*I am the honored and the scorned one.*

*I am the whore and the holy one.*

*I am the wife and the virgin*

...

*I am the silence that is incomprehensible*

*(quoted by Galland, 1990, p. 51)*

In spite of her unmistakable pro-woman position, the feminist met her androcentric master in October 1986, who transformed her black *Kali* (or *Tara* or *Mary*) into a pliant Tantric Buddhist dakini. During her audience, for which she feverishly waited for several days in Dharamsala, she asked His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama: "Did it make sense to link *Tara* and *Mary*?" — "Yes," — the *Kundun* answered her — "*Tara* and *Mary* create a good bridge. This is a direction to go in" (Galland, 1990, p. 93).

He then told the feminist how pro-woman Tibetan Buddhism is. For example, the Sakya Lama, the second-highest-ranking hierarch of the Land of Snows, had a wife and daughter. Somewhere in Nepal there lived a 70-year-old nun who was entitled to teach the Dharma. When he was young there was a famous female hermit in the mountains of Tibet. For him, the Dalai Lama, it made no difference along the path to enlightenment whether a person had a male body or a female one. And then finally the climax: "Tara" — the *Kundun* said — "could actually be taken as a very strong feminist. According to the legend, she knew that there were hardly any Buddhas who had been enlightened in the form of a woman. She was determined to retain her female form and to become enlightened only in this female form. That story had some meaning in it, doesn't it?" — he said with "an infectious smile" to Galland (Galland, 1990, p. 95).

"Smiling" is the first form of communication with a woman which is taught in the lower tantras (the *Kriya Tantra*). The next tantric category which follows is the "look" (*Carya Tantra*), and then the "touch" (*Yoga Tantra*). Galland later reported in fascination what happened to her during the audience: "He [the *Kundun*] got up out of his chair, came over to me as I stood up, and took me firmly by the arms with a laugh. The Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is irrepressibly cheerful. His touch surprised me. It was strong and energetic, like a black belt in *aikido*. The physical power in his hands belied the softness of his appearance. He put his forehead to mine, then pulled away smiling and stood there looking at me, his hands holding my shoulders. His look cut through all the words exchanged and warmed me. I sensed that I was learning the most about him and that I was being given the most by him, right then, Though what it was could not be put into words. This was the real blessing" (Galland, 1990, p. 96).

From this moment on, the entire metaphysical standpoint of the author is transformed. The revolutionary dark *Kali* becomes an obedient "sky walker" (dakini), the radical feminist becomes a pliant "wisdom consort" of Tantric Buddhism. With whatever means, the Dalai Lama succeeded in making a devout Buddhist of the committed follower of the great goddess. From now on, Galland begins to visualize herself along tantric lines as *Tara*. She interprets the legend in which the goddess offers to help her tear-father, *Avalokiteshvara* (*Tara* arose from one of the Bodhisattva's tears), lead all suffering beings on the right path, as her personal mission.

The "initiation" by the *Kundun* did not end with this first encounter, it found its continuation later in a dream of the author's. There Galland sees how the Dalai Lama splashes around in a washtub, completely clothed, and with great amusement. She herself also sits in such a tub. Then suddenly the *Kundun* stands up and looks at her in an evocative silence. "There was nothing between us, only pure being. It was a vivid and real exchange. — Suddenly a blue sword came out of the crown of the Dalai Lama's head over an across the distance between us and down to the crown of my head, all the way down my spine. I felt as though he had just transmitted some great, wordless teaching. The sword was made of blue light. I was very happy. Then he climbed into the third tub, where I was now sitting alone. We sat side by side in silence. I was on the right. Our faces were next to one another, faintly touching" (Galland, 1990, p. 168). The Dalai Lama then climbs out of the tub. She tries to persuade him to explain the situation to her, and in particular

to interpret the significance of the sword. "But every time I asked him a question, he changed forms, like *Proteus*, the old man of the sea, and said nothin" (Galland, 1990, p. 169). At the end of the dream he transformed himself into a turquoise scarab which climbed the wall of the room.

Even if both of the dream's protagonists (the Dalai Lama and China Galland) are fully clothed as they sit together in the washtub, one does not need too much fantasy to see in this scene a sexual magic ritual from the repertoire of the *Vajrayana*. The blue sword is a classic phallic symbol and reminds us of a similar example from Christian mysticism: it was an arrow which penetrated Saint Theresa of Avila as she experienced her mystic love for God. For China Galland it was the sword of light of the supreme Tibetan tantra master.

Soon after the spectacular dream initiation, the "pilgrimages" to the holy places at which the black Madonnas of Europe and America are worshipped described in her book began. Instead of *Marys* she now only sees before her western variations upon the Tibetan *Tara*. The tear (*tara*) of *Avalokiteshvara* (the Dalai Lama) becomes an overarching principle for the American woman. In the dark gypsy Madonna of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer (France), in her famous black sister of Czestochowa (Poland), in the copy of the latter in San Antonio (Texas), but above all in the Madonna of Medjugorje, whom she visits in October 1988, Galland now only sees emanations of the Tibetan goddess.

Whilst she reflects upon *Mary* and *Tara* in the (former) Yugoslavian place of pilgrimage, a prayer to the Tibetan deity comes to her mind. "In it she is said to come in what ever form a person needs her to assume in order for her to be helpful. True compassion. Buddha Tara, indeed all Buddhas, are said to emanate in billions of forms, taking whatever form is necessary to suit the person. Who can say that Mary isn't Tara appearing in a form that is useful and recognizable to the West? When the Venerable Tara Tulku [Galland's Buddhist Guru, a male emanation of *Tara*] came [...], we spoke about this. From the Buddhist perspective, one cannot say that this isn't possible, he assured me: 'If there is a person who says definitely no, the Madonna is not an emanation of Tara, then that person has not understood the teaching of Buddha'. Christ could be an emanation of Buddha" (Galland, 1990, p. 311).

What lies behind this flowery quotation and Galland's eccentric *Mary*-worship can also be referred to as the incorporation of a non-Buddhist cult by *Vajrayana*. Then *Mary* and *Tara* are both so culture-specific that a comparison of the two "goddesses" only makes sense at an extremely general level. Neither does *Tara* give birth to a messiah, nor may we imagine a *Mary* who enters sexual magic union with a Christian monk. Despite such blatant differences, Tantrism's doctrine of emanation allows the absorption of foreign gods without hesitation, yet only under the condition that the Tibetan deity take the original place and the non-Buddhist one be derived from it. In this connection, the report of a Catholic (Benedictine) nun who participated in the *Kalachakra* initiation in Bloomington (1999). For her, the rite set off a Christian experience: "I'm Christian. Never before has that meant so much. This past month I sat at the Kalachakra Initiation Rite in Bloomington with HH the Dalai Lama as the master teacher, a tantric guru. I have never felt so Christian. [...]"

I was sitting in the VIP section on the stage very near the Dalai Lama. The Buddhist audience seemed like advanced practitioners. The audience was nearly 5,000 people under this one huge tent. When dharma students would know that I was a nun they'd ask me what was in my mind as the ritual progressed through the Buddhist texts, recitations, deity visualizations and gestures. At the time, I must confess, I sat with as much respect, openness and emptiness as possible. My Christian heart was simply at rest being there with 'others'. [...] There's no one to one correspondence with Buddhist's rituals especially one as complex and esoteric as the Kalachakra, but there is a way that we live that creates the same feel, the same attitude and dispositions. (Funk, HPI 001) The literature in which Buddhist authors present Christ as a Bodhisattva and as an emanation of *Avalokiteshvara* grows from year to year. We shall come to speak about this in the chapter on the ecumenical politics of the Dalai Lama.

### **The lament of Yeshe Tshogyal**

The tantric partner of Padmasambhava, the founding father of Tibetan Buddhism, is frequently offered as the historical example of a female figure who is supposed to have integrated all the contradictory powers of the feminine within herself. She goes by the name of Yeshe Tshogyal and is said to have achieved an independence unique in the history of female yoginis. Some authors even say (contrary to all doctrines) that she attained the highest goal of full Buddhahood. For this reason she has currently become one of the rare icons for those, primarily western, believers who keep a lookout for emancipated female figures within Tantric Buddhism.

The legend reports that Yeshe Tshogyal married the Tibetan king Trisong Detsen (742–803) at the age of thirteen. Three years later, he gave her to Padmasambhava as his *karma mudra*. Such generous gifts of women to gurus were, as we know, normal in Tantrism and taken for granted.

Yeshe Tshogyal became her master's most outstanding pupil. When she was twenty years old, he initiated her in a flame ritual. During the ceremony the guru, in the form of a terror deity „took command of her lotus throne [the vagina] with his flaming diamond stalk [the penis]“ (quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 70). This showed that she had to suffer the fate of a classic wisdom consort; she was symbolically burnt up.

Later she practiced *Vajrayana* with other men and subsequently underwent a long ascetic period as an “ice virgin” in the coldest mountains of Tibet. Like the historical Buddha she was also tempted by lecherous beings, it was just that in her case these were no “daughters of Mara” but rather handsome young devils. She recognized their lures as the work of Satan and resolutely rejected them. But out of compassion she subsequently slept with all manner of men and gave „her sexual parts to the lustful“ (quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 71). Her devotion in love is so convincing that she could convert seven highwaymen who raped her to Buddhism.

Padmasambhava is supposed to have said to her: „The basis for realizing enlightenment is a human body. Male or female, there is no great difference. But if she develops the mind bent on enlightenment the woman’s body is better” (quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 71). This statement is admittedly revolutionary, but nevertheless we can hardly accept that Yeshe Tshogyal traveled an essentially different path to the countless anonymous yoginis who were “sacrificed” on the altar of Tantrism. [4]

Through constantly visions she was repeatedly urged to offer herself up completely to her master — to sacrifice her own flesh, her blood, her eyes, nose, tongue, ears, heart, entrails, muscles, bones, marrow, and her life energy. One may also begin to seriously doubt her privileged position within Tibetan Buddhism, when one hears her impressive and resigning lament at her woman’s lot:

***I am a woman***

***I have little power to resist danger.***

***Because of my inferior [!] birth, everyone attacks me.***

***If I go as a beggar, dogs attack me.***

***If I have wealth and food, bandits attack me.***

***If I do a great deal, the locals attack me.***

***If I do nothing, gossips attack me.***

***If anything goes wrong, they all attack me.***

***Whatever I do, I have no chance for happiness.***

***Because I am a woman it is hard to follow the Dharma.***

***It is hard even to stay alive.***

(quoted by Gross, 1993, p. 99)

Many centuries after her earthly death, Yeshe Tshogyal became for the Fifth Dalai Lama a constant companion in his visions and advised him in his political decisions. During a meeting, “Tshogyal appears in the form of a white lady adorned with bone ornaments. She enters into union with him. The white and the red bodhicitta [seed] flow to and fro” (Karmay, 1988, p. 54). Such scenes of union with her are mentioned several times in the *Secret Visions* of the “Great Fifth”. Some of these are described so concretely that they probably concern real human *mudras* who

assumed the role of Yeshe Tshogyal. Once His Holiness saw in her heart “the mandala of the Phurba [ritual dagger] deity” (Karmay, 1988, p. 67). Perhaps she wanted to remind him with this vision of the agonizing fate of *Srinmo*, the Mother of Tibet, in whose heart a ritual dagger is also stuck. In another vision she appeared together with the goddess *Candali* and three further dakinis. They danced and sang the words “Phurba is the essence of all tutelary deities.” (Karmay, 1988, p. 67). [5]

Even if, as is claimed by many contemporary tantra masters and feminists, Yeshe Tshogyal is supposed to be the most prominent historical representative of an “emancipated” *Vajrayana* female Buddhist, her unhappy fate shows just how degradingly and contemptuously the countless unknown and unmentioned *karma mudras* of Tibetan history must have been treated. The example she provides should be more a deterrent than a positive one, then she was more or less an instrument of Padmasambhava’s. Her current rise in prominence is exclusively a product of the contemporary *Zeitgeist*, which needs to generate counterimages to an essentially androcentric Buddhism so as to gain a foothold in the western world.

## **The mythological background to the Tibetan-Chinese conflict:**

### **Avalokiteshvara versus Guanyin**

We would now like to point out that, in the historical relationship between Tibet and China, the latter played and continues to play the feminine part, as if the sky-high mountains of the Himalayas and the Chinese river plains were a man and a woman in stand-off, as if a battle of the sexes had been being waged for centuries between “masculine” Lhasa and “feminine” Beijing. This is not supposed to imply that, in contrast to the patriarchal Land of Snows, a matriarchy has the say in China. We know full well how the “Middle Kingdom” has from the outset pursued a fundamentally androcentric politics and how nothing has changed in this regard up until the present. Hence, what we primarily wish to say here is that from a *Tibetan* viewpoint the conflict between the two countries is interpreted as a gender conflict. We hope to demonstrate in this chapter that the Dalai Lama is opposed by the threatening and ravenous “Great Female”, the terror dakini which is China and which he must conquer and subjugate along tantric lines.

The reverse cannot be so simply stated: the Chinese Emperor admittedly saw the rulers of Potala as powerful spiritual opponents, but understood himself thus only in a very few cases to be the representative of a “womanly power”. Yet such historical exceptions do exist and we would like to consider these in more detail. There is also the fact that China’s androcentric culture has been repeatedly limited and relativized by strong female elements. Real feminine influences can be recognized in Chinese mythology, in particular national philosophies (especially Taoism), and sometimes also in the politics, far more than was ever the case in the masculine Tibetan monastic empire. For example, Lao-tzu, the great proclaimer of the *Dao De Jing*, clearly stresses the feminine factor ( or rather what one understood this to be at the time) in his practical “theory of power”:

*Nothing is weaker than water,  
But when it attacks something hard  
Or resistant, then nothing withstands it,  
And nothing will alter its way.  
[...] weakness prevails  
Over strength and [...] gentleness conquers  
The adamant [...]*

it says in the 78<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Dao De Jing*. Among Chinese Buddhists the greatest reverence is up until the present day reserved for a goddess (*Guanyin*), a female Buddha and no god. China's few yet famous/notorious female rulers in particular showed a unique tension in dealings with the kings and hierarchs of the Tibetan "Land of Snows". For this reason we shall consider these in somewhat more detail. But let us first turn to the Chinese goddess, *Guanyin*.

### **China (*Guanyin*) and Tibet (*Avalokiteshvara*)**

How easily the ambivalent gender role of the male androgyne *Avalokiteshvara* could tip over into the feminine is demonstrated by "his" transformation into *Guanyin*, the "goddess of mercy", who is still highly revered in China and Japan. Originally, *Guanyin* had no independent existence, but was solely considered to be a feminine guise of the Bodhisattva (*Avalokiteshvara*). In memory of her male past she sometimes in older portrayals has a small goatee. How, where, and why the sex change came about is considered by scholars to be extremely puzzling. It must have taken place in the early Tang dynasty from the seventh century on, then before this *Avalokiteshvara* was all but exclusively worshipped in male form in China too.



*Guanyin*

There is already in the early fifth century a canon in which 33 different appearances of the “light god” are mentioned and seven of these are female. This proves that the incarnation of a Bodhisattva in female form was not excluded by the doctrine of *Mahayana* Buddhism. To the benefit of all suffering beings — it says in one text — the “redeemer” could assume any conceivable form, for example that of a holy saying, of medicinal herbs, of mythical winged creatures, cannibals, yes, even that of women (Chayet, 1993, p. 154). But what such exceptions do not explain is why the masculine *Avalokiteshvara* was essentially supplanted and replaced by the feminine *Guanyin* in China. In the year 828 C.E. each Chinese monastery had at least one statue of the goddess. The chronicles report the existence of 44,000 figures.

There is more or less accord among orientalist that *Guanyin* is a syncretic figure, formed by the integration into the Buddhist system imported from India of formerly more powerful native Chinese goddesses. A legend recounts that *Guanyin* originally dwelled among the mortals as the king's daughter, *Miao Shan*, and that out of boundless goodness she sacrificed herself for her father.

This pious tale is, however, somewhat lacking in vibrancy as the genesis of such an influential religious lady as *Guanyin*, but nonetheless interesting in that it once more offers us a report of a female sacrifice in the interests of a patriarch.

We find the suggestion often put forward by the Tibetan side, that the worship of *Guanyin* is a Chinese variant of the Tibetan *Tara* cult, similarly unconvincing, since the latter was first introduced into Tibet in the eleventh century, 400 years after the transformation of *Avalokiteshvara* into a goddess. In view of the exceptional power which the goddess enjoys in China it seems much more reasonable to see in her a descendant of the great Taoist matriarchs: the primordial mother *Niang Niang*, or the great goddess *Xi Wangmu*, or *Tianhou Shengmu*, who is worshipped as the “sea star”.

If *Avalokiteshvara* represents a “fire deity”, then *Guanyin* is clearly a “water goddess”. She is often pictured upon a rock in the sea with a water jug or a lotus flower in her hand. The “goddess on the water lily”, who sometimes holds a child in her arms and then resembles the Christian Madonna, fascinated the royal courts of Europe in the seventeenth century already, and the first European porcelain manufacturers copied her statues. Her epithets, “Empress of Heaven”, “Holy Mother”, “Mother of Mercy”, also drew her close to the cult of Mary for the West. Like *Mary* then, *Guanyin* is also called upon as the female savior from the hardships and fears of a wretched world. When worries and suffering make one unhappy, then one turns to her.

The transformation of *Avalokiteshvara* into a Chinese goddess is a mythic event which has deeply shaped the metapolitical relationship between China and Tibet. Historical relations of both nations with one another, although they both exhibit patriarchal structures, may thus be described through the symbolism of a battle of the sexes between the fire god *Chenrezi* and the water goddess *Guanyin*. What is played out between the gods also has — the tantras believe — its correspondences among mortals. Via the fate of the three most powerful female figures from China’s past, we shall examine whether the tantric pattern can be convincingly applied to the historical conflicts between the two countries (Tibet and China).

### **Wu Zetian (Guanyin) and Songtsen Gampo (Avalokiteshvara)**

Following the collapse of the Han kingdom in the third century C.E., *Mahayana* Buddhism spread through China and blossomed in the early Tang period (618–c. 750). After this a renaissance of Confucianism begins which leads from the mid-ninth century to a persecution of the Buddhists. In the *Hua-yen* Buddhism of the seventh century (a Chinese form of *Mahayana* with some tantric elements), especially in the writings of Fa-Tsang, the cosmic “Sun Buddha”, *Vairocana*, is revered as the highest instance.

At the end of the seventh century, as the *Guanyin* cult was forming in China, a powerful woman and Buddhist reigned in the “Middle Kingdom”, the Empress Wu Zetian (c. 625–c. 705). Formerly a concubine of two Emperors, father and son — after their deaths Wu Zetian took, step by step and with great skill, the “Dragon Throne” in the year 683. She conducted a radical shake-up of the country’s power elite. The ruling Li family was systematically and brutally replaced by members of her own Wu lineage. Nonetheless, the matriarch did not recoil from banishing her own son even on the basis of power political concerns nor from executing other family members when these opposed her will. Her generals were engaged with varying success in the most bloody battles with the Tibetans and other bordering peoples.

Probably because she was a woman, her unscrupulous and despotic art became proverbial for later historians. The outrageousness which radiated out from this “monstrous” Grande Dame upon the Dragon Throne still echoes today in the descriptions of the historians. The German Sinologist, Otto Franke, for example, characterizes her with what is for an academic exceptionally strong emotions: “Malicious, vengeful, and cruel to the point of sadism, thus she began her career, unbridled addiction to power, insensitivity even to the natural maternal instinct, and a unquenchable desire for murder accompany her on the stolen throne, grotesque megalomania combined with religious insanity distorts her old age, childish helplessness in the face of every form of charlatanism and complete lack of judgement in administration and politics lead finally to her fall and bring the state to the edge ... A demoness in her unbridled passion, Wu Zetian allied herself with the dark figures of Chinese history” (Franke, 1961, p. 424).

Wu Zetian supported Buddhism fanatically, so as to establish it as the state religion in place of Daoism. “The Empress who takes God as her example”, as she called herself, was a megalomaniac not just about political matters but also in religious ones, especially because she let herself be celebrated as the incarnation of the Buddha *Maitreya*, of the ruler of the of the coming eon. Her she appealed to prophecies from the mouth of the historical Buddha. In the *Great Cloud Sutra* it could be read that, 700 years after his death, Shakyamuni would be reborn in the form of a beautiful princess, whose kingdom would become a real paradise. “Having planted the germs of the Way during countless *kalpas* [ages], [she as *Maitreya*] consents to the joyous exaltation by the people”, it says of the Empress in one contemporary document. (Forte, 1988, p. 122). According to other sources, Wu Zetian also allowed herself to be worshipped as the Bodhisattva, *Avalokiteshvara*, and as the Sun Buddha, *Vairocana*.

As Buddhist she oriented herself to the *Abhidharmakosa*’s cyclical conception of the four ages of the world we have described above, and which we also find in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Thus, at end of the dark and at the dawn of the new age to come, stood this Chinese Empress in the salvational figure of the Buddha *Maitreya*. Her chiliastic movement, which she led as a living Buddhist messiah, had no small following among the people, yet came into hefty conflict with established Buddhism and the Confucian powers at court, above all because this savior was also a woman.

From the Buddhist teachings Wu Zetian also adopted the political doctrine of the *Chakravartin*, the wheel turner who reigns over the entire globe. She would lead her people, we may read in a

prophecy, by “turning the golden wheel” (Forte, 1988, p.122). One of her titles was “The Golden Wheel of Dominion Turning God-Emperor”. (Franke, 1961, p. 417). But even this was not enough for her. Two years later she intensified her existing epithet and let herself be known as “ The Holy God-Emperor Surpassing The Former Golden Wheel Turning God-Emperor” (Franke, 1961, p. 417). The “golden wheel”, along with the other appropriate emblems of the *Chakravartin* were hung in her hall of audience.

So as to visibly demonstrate and symbolically buttress her control of the world, she ordered the entire kingdom to be covered with a network of state temples. Each temple housed a statue of the Sun Buddha (*Vairocana*). All of these images were considered to be the emanations of a gigantic *Vairocana* which was assembled in the imperial temple of the capital and in which the Empress allowed herself to be worshipped.

Among the sacred buildings erected at her command was to be found what was referred to as a time tower (*tiantang*). According to Antonino Forte, the first ever mechanical clock was assembled there. The discovery of a “time machine” (the clock) is certainly one of the greatest cultural achievements in the history of humankind. Nevertheless we today see such an event only from its technical and quantitative side. But for people with an ancient world view this “mechanical” clock was of far greater significance. With its construction and erection a claim was made to the symbolic and real control over time as such. Hence, following the assembly of the *tiantang* (time tower), Wu Zetian allowed herself to be worshipped as the living time goddess.

Alongside the “time tower” she built a huge metal pillar (the so-called “heavenly axis”). This was supposed to depict Mount Meru, the center of the Buddhist universe. Just as the *tiantang* symbolized control over time, the metallic “heavenly axis” announced the Empress’s control of space. Correspondingly her palace was also considered to be the microcosmic likeness of the entire universe. She declared her capital, Liaoyang, to be not just the metropolis of China, but also the domicile of the gods. *Space* and *Time* were thus, at least according to doctrine, firmly in Wu Zetian’s hands.

It will already have occurred to the reader that the religious/political visions of Wu Zetian correspond to the spirit of the *Kalachakra Tantra* in so many aspects that one could think it might have been a direct influence. However, this ruler lived three hundred years before the historical publication date of the Time Tantra. Nevertheless, the influence of *Vajrayana* (which has in fact been found in the fourth century in India) cannot be ruled out. Hua-yen Buddhism, from the ideas of which the Empress derived her philosophy of state, is also regarded as “proto-tantric” by experts: “Thus the Chou-Wu theocracy [of the Empress] is the form of state in China which comes closest to a tantric theocracy or Buddhocracy: the whole world is considered as the body of a Buddha, and the Empress who rules over this sacramentalized political community is considered to be the highest of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas” (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 630). [6]

Although no historical connection between the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the “proto-tantric” world view of Wu Zetian can be proved, striking parallels in the history of ideas and symbols exist. For example, alongside the claim to the “world throne” as *Chakravartin*, the implied control over time and space, we find a further parallel in Wu Zetian’s grab for the two heavenly orbs (the sun and moon) which is characteristic of the Time Tantra. She let a special Chinese character be created as her own name which was called “sun and moon rising up out of the emptiness” (Franke, 1961, p. 415).

But the final intentions of the two systems are not compatible. The Empress Wu Zetian is hardly likely to have striven towards the Buddhocracy of an androcentric Lamaism. In contrast, it is probable that gynocentric forces were hidden behind her Buddhist mask. For example, she officially granted her female (!) forebears bombastic titles and epithets of “Mother Earth” (Franke, 1961, p. 415). In the patriarchal culture of China this *feminist* act of state was perceived as a monstrous blasphemy. Hence, with reference to this naming, we may read in a contemporary historical critique that, “such a confusion of terms as that of Wu had not been experienced since records began” (Franke, 1961, p. 415).

The unrestrained ruler usurped for herself all the posts of the masculine monastic religion. In her hunger for power she even denied her femininity and let herself be addressed as “old Buddha lord” — an act which even today must seem evilly presumptuous for the androcentric Lamaists. At any rate it was seen this way by an exile Tibetan historian who, a thousand years after her death, portrayed the Chinese Empress as a monstrous, man-eating dragon obsessed with all depravities. “The Empress Wu,” K. Dhondup wrote as recently as 1995 in the *Tibetan Review*, “one of the most frightening and cruel characters to have visited Chinese history, awakened her sexual desire at the ripe old age of 70 and pursued it with such relentless zeal that the hunger and voracity of her sexual fulfillment into her nineties became the staple diet of street whispers and gossips, and the powerful aphrodisiacs that she medicated herself gave her youthful eyebrows ...” (*Tibetan Review*, January 1995, p. 11).

Did Wu Zetian stand in religious and symbolic competition with the cosmic ambitions of the ruler of the great Tibetan kingdom of the time? We can only speculate about that. Aside from the fact that she was involved in intense wars with the dreaded Tibetans, we know only very little about relations between the “world views” of the two countries at the time of her reign. It is, however, of interest for our “symbolic analysis” of inner-Asian history that the Lamaist historians posthumously declared the Tibetan king, Songtsen Gampo, who died forty years before the reign of Wu Zetian in the year 650, a *Chakravartin*. It was Songtsen Gampo (617-650) — the reader will recall — who as the incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* nailed the mother of Tibet (*Srinmo*) to the ground with *phurbas* (ritual daggers) so as to build the sacred geography of the Land of Snows over her.

Behind the life story of Wu Zetian shines the archetypal image of *Guanyin* as the female, Chinese opponent to the male, Tibetan *Avalokiteshvara*. She herself pretended to be the incarnation of a Buddha (*Vairocana* or *Maitreya*), but since she was a female it is quite possible that she was the

historical phenomenon which occasioned *Avalokiteshvara*'s above-mentioned sex change into the principal goddess of Chinese Buddhism (*Guanyin*).

At any rate Songtsen Gampo and Wu Zetian together represent the cosmic claims to power of *Avalokiteshvara* and *Guanyin*. We can regard them as the historical projections of these two archetypes. Their metapolitical competition is currently completely overlooked in the conflict between the two countries (China and Tibet), which leads to a foreshortened interpretation of the Tibetan/Chinese "discordances". In the past the mythical dimensions of the struggle between the "Land of Snows" and the "Middle Kingdom" have never been denied by the two parties; it is just the western eye for "realpolitik" cannot perceive it.

Wu Zetian was not able to realize her Buddhist gynocentric visions. In the year 691 the *tiantang* (time tower) and the clock within it were destroyed in a "terrible" storm. Her reign was plunged into a dangerous crisis, then, as several influential priests claimed, this "act of God" showed that the gods had rejected her. But she retained sufficient power and political influence to be able to reassemble the tower. However, in 694 this new *Tiantang* was also destroyed, this time by fire. The court saw a repetition of the divine punishment in the flames and concluded that the imperial religious claim to power had failed. Wu Zetian had to relinquish her messianic title of "Buddha *Maitreya*" from then on.

### **Ci Xi (Guanyin) and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (Avalokiteshvara)**

One thousand years later, the cosmological rivalry between China (*Guanyin*) and Tibet (*Avalokiteshvara*) was tragically replayed in the tense relation between the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the Empress Dowager Ci Xi (1835-1908).

Ci Xi appeared on the political stage in the year 1860. Like her predecessor, Wu Zetian, she started out as a noble-born concubine of the Emperor, and even as a seventeen year old she had worked her way up step by step through the hierarchy of his harem and bore the sole heir to the throne. The imperial father, Emperor Xian Feng, died shortly after the birth, and the ambitious mother of the new son of heaven took over the business of governing the country until he came of age, and *de facto* beyond that. When her son died suddenly at the age of 18 she adopted her nephew, who ascended the Dragon Throne as Emperor Guangxu but likewise remained completely under her influence until his death.

Officially, Ci Xi supported Confucianism, but privately, like many members of the Manchu dynasty (1644-1911) before her, she felt herself attracted to the Lamaist doctrine. She was well-versed in the canonical writings, wrote Buddhist mystery plays herself, and had these performed by her eunuchs. Her apartments were filled with numerous Buddha statues and she was a passionate collector of old Lamaist temple flags. Her favorite sculpture was a jade statue of *Guanyin* given to

her by a great lama. She saw herself as the earthly manifestation of this goddess and sometimes dressed in her robes. „Whenever I have been angry, or worried over anything,” she said to one of her ladies in waiting, „by dressing up as the Goddess of Mercy it helps me to calm myself and to play the part I represent ... by having a photograph taken of myself dressed in this costume, I shall be able to see myself as I ought to be at all times” (Seagrave, 1992., p. 413).



*Ci Xi and attendants*

Such dressings-up were in no sense purely theatrical, rather Ci Xi experienced them as sacred performances, as rituals during which the energy of the Chinese water goddess (*Guanyin*) flowed into her. She publicly professed herself to be a Buddhist incarnation and likewise affected the male title of “old Buddha lord” (*lao fo yeh*), a label which became downright vernacular. We are thus dealing with a gynocentric reversal of the androgynous *Avalokiteshvara* myth here, as in the case of the Empress Wu Zetian. *Guanyin*, the Chinese goddess of mercy, makes an exclusive

claim for masculine control, and thus has, within the body of a woman, the gender of a male Buddha at her disposal. In the imperialist, patriarchal West, Ci Xi was, as the American historian Sterling Seagrave has demonstrated, the victim of a hate-filled, defamatory, sensationalist press who insinuated she was guilty of every conceivable crime. „The notion,” Seagrave writes, „that the corrupt Chinese were dominated by a reptilian woman with grotesque sexual requirements tantalized American men” (Seagrave, 1992, p. 268). Just like her predecessor, Wu Zetian, she became a terrible „dragoness”, a symbol of aggressive femininity which has dominated masculine fantasies for thousands of years: „By universal agreement the woman who occupied China’s Dragon Throne was indeed a reptile. Not a glorious Chinese dragon — serene, benevolent, good-natured, aquarian — but a cave-dwelling, fire-breathing Western dragon, whose very breath was toxic. A dragon lady” (Seagrave, 1992, p. 272).

Thus, in mythological terms the two Bodhisattvas, *Avalokiteshvara* and *Guanyin*, met anew in the figures of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the Empress Dowager. From the moment Ci Xi realized her claim to power the two historical figures thus faced one another in earnest competition and a discord which extended far beyond questions of practical politics. The chief imperial eunuch, Li Lien Ying, foresaw this conflict most clearly and warned Ci Xi several times against meeting the Tibetan god-king in person. He even referred to an acute mortal danger for both the Empress and her adoptive son, the Emperor Guangxu. The following words are from him or another courtier: “The great lama incarnations are the spawn of hell. They know no human emotion when matters concern the power of the Yellow Church” (Koch, 1960, p. 216).

But Ci Xi did not want to heed such voices of warning and peremptorily required the visit of the Hierarch from the “roof of the world”, so as to discuss with him the meanwhile internationally very complex question of Tibet. Only after a number of failed attempts and many direct and indirect threats was she able to motivate the mistrustful and cautious prince of the church to undertake the troublesome journey to China in the year 1908.

The reception for the Dalai Lama was grandiose, yet even at the start there were difficulties when it came to protocol. Neither of the parties wanted with even the most minor gesture to make it known that they were subject to the other in any way whatsoever. In the main, the Chinese maintained the upper hand. It was true that the Hierarch from Lhasa was spared having to kowtow, then after lengthy negotiations it was finally agreed that he would only have to perform those rituals of politeness which were otherwise expected of members of the imperial family — an exceptional privilege from Beijing’s point of view, but from the perspective of the god-king and potential world ruler an extremely problematic social status. Did the Thirteenth Dalai Lama revenge himself for this humiliation?

On October 30, Ci Xi and Guangxu staged a banquet in the “Hall of Shining Purple”. The Dalai Lama was already present when the Emperor cancelled at the last minute due to illness. Three days later, on the occasion of her 74<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Empress Dowager requested that the ecclesiastical dignity conduct for her the “Ceremony for the Attainment of Long Life” in the “Throne

Hall of Zealous Government". This came to pass. The Dalai Lama offered holy water and small cakes which were supposed to grant her wish for a long life. Afterwards tea was served and then Ci Xi distributed her gifts. At midday she personally formulated an edict in which she expressed her thanks to the Dalai Lama and promised to pay him an annuity of 10,000 taels. Additionally he was to be given the title of "Sincerely Obedient, through Reincarnation More Helpful, Most Excellent through Himself Existing Buddha of the Western Heavens".

This gift and the bombastic title were a silk-clad provocation. With them Ci Xi did not at all want to honor the Dalai Lama, rather, she wished in contrast to demonstrate Tibet's dependency upon the "Middle Kingdom". For one thing, by being granted an income the god-king was degraded to the status of an imperial civil servant. Further, in referring to the incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* as a "Sincerely Obedient Buddha", she left no doubt about to whom he was in future to be obedient. Just how important such "clichés" were for the participants is shown by the reaction of the American envoy present, who interpreted the granting of the title as marking the end of the Dalai Lama's political power. The latter protested in vain against the edict and "his pride suffered terribly" (Mehra, 1976, p. 20). All of this took place in the world of political phenomena.

From a metaphysical point of view, however, as *Guanyin* Ci Xi wanted to make the powerful *Avalokiteshvara* her servant. The actual "match of the gods" took place on the afternoon of the same day (November 3) during a festivity to which the "Obedient Buddha" was once again invited by Her Imperial Highness. Ci Xi, as the female "old Buddha lord" dared to appear before the incarnation of the humiliated fire god, *Avalokiteshvara* (the Thirteenth Dalai Lama), in the costume of the water goddess *Guanyin*, surrounded by dancing Bodhisattvas and sky walkers played by the imperial eunuchs. There was singing, laughter, fooling around, boating, and enormous enjoyment. There had been similar such "divine" appearances of the Empress Dowager before, but in the face of the already politically and religiously degraded god-king from Tibet, the mocked patriarchal arch-enemy, the triumphal procession of *Guanyin* became on this occasion a spectacular and provocative climax.

The Empress Dowager probably believed herself to be protected from any attacks upon her health by the longevity ceremony which she had cajoled from the Dalai Lama the day before. In the evening, however, she began to feel unwell, and became worse the next day. Forty-eight hours later the Dalai Lama came to the Empress and handed her a statuette of the "Buddha of Eternal Life" (a variant of *Avalokiteshvara*) with the instruction that she erect it over the graves of the emperors in China's east. Prince Chong, although he objected strongly because of premonition, was with harsh words entrusted by Ci Xi to do so nonetheless. When he returned to the imperial palace on November 13, the female "old Buddha lord" felt herself to be in a good mood and was fit again, but the Emperor (her adoptive son) now lay dying and passed away the next day. He had been prone to illness for years, but the fact that his death was so sudden was also found most mysterious by his personal doctors and hence they did not exclude the possibility that he had been poisoned. [7]

But the visit of His Holiness brought still more bad luck for the imperial family, just as the chief eunuch, Li Lien Ying, had prophesied. On November 15, one day after the death of the regent, the Empress Dowager Ci Xi suffered a severe fainting fit, recovered for a few hours, but then saw her end drawing nigh, dictated her parting decree, corrected it with her own hand and died in full possession of her senses.

It should be obvious that the sudden deaths of the Emperor and his adoptive mother immediately following one another gave rise to wild rumors and that all manner of speculations about the role and presence of the Dalai Lama were in circulation. Naturally, the suspicion that the “god-king” from Tibet had acted magically to get his cosmic rival out of the way was rife among the courtiers, well aware of tantric ideas and practices. On the basis of the still to be described voodoo practices which have been cultivated in the Potala for centuries, such a suspicion is also definitely not to be excluded, but rather is probable. At any rate, as *Avalokiteshvara* the Hierarch likewise represents the death god *Yama*. Even the current, Fourteenth Dalai Lama sees — as we shall show — with pride a causal connection between a tantric ritual he conducted in 1976 and the death of Mao Zedong. Even if one does not believe in the efficacy of such magical actions, one must concede an amazing synchronicity in these cases. They are also, at least for the Tibetan tradition, a taken-for-granted cultural element. The Lamaist princes of the church have always been convinced that they can achieve victory over their enemies via magic rather than weapons.

What is nonetheless absolutely clear from the events in Beijing is the result, namely the triumph of *Avalokiteshvara* over *Guanyin*, the patriarch destroying the matriarch. Perhaps *Guanyin* had to lose this metaphysical battle because she had not understood the fine details of energy transfers in Tantrism? As Ci Xi she had grasped masculine power, as water goddess, fire, and then in her superhuman endeavors she allowed herself to be set alight by the flames of ambition. Perhaps she played the role of the ignited *Candali* (of the “burning water”), without knowing that it was the tantra master from the Land of Snows who had set her alight ?

But the Dalai Lama’s political plans did not work out at all. The new Regency held him in Beijing until he agreed to the Chinese demand that Tibet be recognized as a province of the Chinese Empire. England and Russia has also given the Chinese an undertaking that they would not interfere in any way in their relations with Tibet, so as to avoid a conflict with each other. Only in 1913, two years after the final disempowerment of the Manchu dynasty (1911) did it come to a Tibetan declaration of independence, and that with an extremely interesting justification. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama issued a proclamation which said literally that the Manchu throne, which had been occupied by the legal Emperor as “world ruler” (*Chakravartin*), was now vacant. For this reason the Tibetan had no further obligations to China and worldly power now automatically devolved to him, the Hierarch in the Potala — reading between the lines, this means that he himself now performs the functions of a *Chakravartin* (Klieger, 1991, p. 32).

**Jiang Qing (Guanyin) and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (Avalokiteshvara)**

There is an amazing repetition of the problematic relation of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (*Avalokiteshvara*) to the Empress Dowager Ci Xi (*Guanyin*) in the 1960s. We refer to the relation of Jiang Qing (1913–1991), the wife of Mao Zedong, to His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. To this day the *Kundun* remains convinced that the chairman of the Communist Party of China was not completely informed about the vandalistic events in Tibet in which the “Red Guard” ravaged the monasteries of the Land of Snows, and that he probably would not have approved of them. He sees the Chinese attacks against the Lamaist clergy as primarily the destructive work of Jiang Qing. Mao’s companion did in fact drive the rebellion the young to a peak without regard for her own party or the populace, significantly worsening the chaos in the whole country. In this assessment the Tibetan god-king agrees, completely unintentionally, with the official criticism from contemporary China: “During the cultural revolution the counter-revolutionary clique around ... Jiang Qing helped themselves to the left error under concealment of their true motives, and thus deliberately kicked at the scientific theories of Marxism-Leninism as well as the thoughts of Mao Zedong. They rejected the proper religious politics which the Party pursued directly following the establishment of the PR China. Thereby they completely destroyed the religious work of the Party” — it says in a Chinese government document from 1982 (MacInnis, 1993, p. 46).

In these contemporary events, so significant for the history of the Land of Snows, the feminine also appears- in accordance with the tantric pattern and the androcentric viewpoint of the Dalai Lama — as the radical and hate-filled destructive force which (like an uncontrollable “fire woman”) wants to destroy the Lamaist monastic state. Then in the view of the Tibetans in exile the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is regarded as the beginning of the “cultural genocide” which is supposed to have threatened Tibet since this time. Not without bitterness, the current god-king thus notes that the Red Guard gave Mao’s wife the chance, “to behave like an Empress” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 267).

In the case of Jiang Qing it is nevertheless not as easy to see her as an incarnation of *Guanyin* and an opponent of *Avalokiteshvara* (the Dalai Lama) as it is with Ci Xi, who deliberately took on this divine role. With her Marxist-Leninist orientation, the Communist Jiang Qing can only unconsciously or semiconsciously have become a “vessel” of the Chinese water goddess. Publicly, she projected an atheist image — at least from a western viewpoint. But this fundamentally anti-religious attitude must — more and more historians are coming to agree — be exposed as a pretence. Maoism was — as we shall later discuss at length — a deeply religious, mythic movement, located totally within the tradition of the Chinese Empire. The Dalai Lama’s suspicion that Jiang Qing felt like an Empress is thus correct.

Incidentally, she did so quite consciously, then she openly compared herself to the Empress Wu Zetian, who — as we have shown — tried as a female Buddha to seize control of the world, and who symbolically preempted the ideas of the *Kalachakra Tantra* in the construction of a time tower. Jiang Qing also wanted to seize the time wheel of history. In accordance with the Chinese predilection for all manner of ancestral traditions, she (the Communist) had clothes made for her in the style of the old Tang ruler (Wu Zetian).

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“Jiang Qing, who had previously taken little interest in Chinese history, became an avid student of the career of Wu [Zetian] and the careers of other great women near the throne. Her personal library swelled with books on the subject. Teams of writers from her fanatically loyal faction scurried to prepare articles showing that Empress Wu, until then generally regarded as a lustfull, power-hungry shrew, was ‘anti-Confucian’ and hence ‘progressive’. ‘Women can become emporer,’ Jiang would say to her staff members. ‘Even under communism there can be a woman ruler.’ She remarked to Mao’s doctor that England was not feudal as China because it was ‘often ruled by queens.’” (Ross, 1999, p. 273) - “Jiang Qing was deeply interested in the ideas and methods of Emperess Dowager Ci Xi. But it was impossible for her to praise Ci Xi publicly because ultimately Empress Dowager Ci Xi failed to keep the West at bay and because she was too vivid a part of the *ancien régime* that the Communist Party had gloriously buried.” (Ross, 1999, p. 27)

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But can we conclude from Jiang Qing’s preference for the imperial form of power that she is an incarnation of *Guanyin*? On the basis of her own view of things, we must probably reject the hypothesis. But if — like the Buddhist Tantrics — we accept that deities represent force fields which can be embodied in people, then such an assumption seems natural. The only question is whether it is in every case necessary that such people deliberately summon the gods or whether it is sufficient when their spirit and energy “inspire” the people in their possession to act. What counts in the final instance for a Tantric is a convincing symbolic interpretation of political events: The mythic competition between China and Tibet, between the Chinese Emperor and the Dalai Lama, between the Empress Wu Zetian and the Tibetan kings, between the Empress Dowager Ci Xi and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, all give the conflict between the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Jiang Qing a metapolitical meaning and render it comprehensible within a tantric scheme of things. The parallels between these conflicts are so striking that from an ancient viewpoint they can without further ado been seen as the expression of a primordial, divine scenario, the dispute between *Avalokiteshvara* and *Guanyin* over the world throne of the *Chakravartin*.

Before we in conclusion compare the religious-political role of the three “Empresses” with one another, we would like to once more emphasize that it is not us who see in China a matriarchal power which opposes a patriarchal Tibet. In contrast — we plan in the rest of this study to report several times upon Chinese androcentrism. What we nonetheless wish to convey is the fact that from a Lamaist/tantric viewpoint the Chinese-Tibetan conflict is perceived as a battle of the sexes. Tantrism does not just sexualize landscapes, the elements, time, and the entire universe, but likewise politics as well.

From a Chinese (Taoist, Confucian, or Communist) viewpoint this may appear completely different. But we must not overlook that two of the female rulers we have introduced were fanatic (!) Buddhists with tantric (Ci Xi), or proto-tantric (Wu Zetian) ideas. Both will thus have perceived their political relationship to Tibet through *Vajrayana* spectacles, so to speak.

Wu Zetian let herself be worshipped as an incarnated Buddha and a Buddhist messiah. Her religious-political visions display an astonishing similarity to those of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, although this was first formulated several centuries later. As *Chakravartin* she stood in mythically irreconcilable opposition to the Tibetan kings, who, albeit later (in the 17<sup>th</sup> century), were entitled

to the same designation. Admittedly, one cannot speak of her as an incarnation of *Guanyin*, since the cult of the Chinese goddess first crystallized out in her time. But there are a number of indications that she was the historical individual in whom the transformation of *Avalokiteshvara* into *Guanyin* took place. She was — in her own view — the first “living Buddha” in female form, as is likewise true of *Guanyin*.

Most unmistakably, *Guanyin* is “incarnated” in Ci Xi, since the Empress Dowager openly announced herself to be an embodiment of the goddess. There are many indications that the Chinese autocrat was deeply familiar with the secrets of Lamaist Tantrism. She must therefore have seen her encounter with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama as an elevated symbolic game for which in the end she had to pay for with her life.

With Jiang Qing, the statement that she was a incarnation of *Guanyin* is no longer so convincing. The fanatical Communist was no follower of Buddha like her two predecessors and maintained an atheist image. But in her “culturally revolutionary” decisions and “proletarian” art rituals, in her contempt for all clergy, she acted and thought like a “raging goddess” who revolted with hate and violence against patriarchal traditions. Her radical nature made her into an avenging Erinnye (or an out-of-control dakini) in a tantric “match of the gods” (as the Tantrics saw history to be). There is no doubt that high-ranking Tibetan lamas interpreted the historical role of Jiang Qing thus. All three “Empresses” failed with their politics and religious system.

Wu Zetian had to officially renounce her title as “Coming Buddha”. After her death, Confucianism regained its power and began a countrywide persecution of the Buddhists.

Ci Xi died during the visit of her “arch-enemy” (the Thirteenth Dalai Lama). Within a few years of her death the reign of the Manchu dynasty was over (1911).

Jiang Qing was condemned to death by her own (Communist) party as a “left deviationist”, and then pardoned. Even before she died (in 1991), the Maoist regime of “the Red Sun” had collapsed once and for all.

Starting once more from a tantric view of things, one can speculate as to whether all three female historical figures (who as incarnations of *Guanyin* are to be assigned to the element of “water”) had to suffer the fate of a “fire woman”, a *Candali*. Then in the end, like the *Candali*, they founder in their own flames (political passion). All three, although staunch opponents of a purely men-oriented Buddhism, deliberately grasped the religious images and methods of the patriarchally organized world. Wu Zetian and Ci Xi let themselves be addressed with a male title as “old Buddha

lord”; Jiang Qing drove all feminine, erotic elements out of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and issued the young women of the Red Guard with male uniforms. In light of the three Chinese “Empresses” the thought occurs that an emancipatory women’s movement cannot survive when it seizes and utilizes the androcentric power symbols and attitudes for itself. We turn to a consideration of these thoughts in the chapter which follows.

## **Feminism and Tantric Buddhism**

Once the majority of the high-ranking Tibetan lamas had to flee the Land of Snows from the end of the 1950s and then began to disseminate Tantric Buddhism in the West, they were willingly or unwillingly confronted with modern feminism. This encounter between the women’s movement of the twentieth century and the ancient system of the androcentric monastic culture is not without a certain delicacy. In itself, one would have to presume that here two irreconcilable enemies from way back came together and that now “the fur would fly”. But this unique relation — as we shall soon see — took on a much more complicated form. Yet first we introduce a courageous and self-confident woman from Tibetan history, who formulated a clear and unmistakable rejection of Tantric Buddhism.

### ***Tse Pongza — the challenger of Padmasambhava***

Shortly after Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche), the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, entered the “Land of Snows”, a remarkable woman became his decisive opponent. It was no lesser figure than Tse Pongza, the principal wife of the Tibetan king, Trisong Detsen (742–803), and the mother of the heir apparent. The ruler had brought the famous *vajra* master into the country from India in order to weaken the dominant Bon religion and the nobility. With his active assistance the old priesthood (of the Bon) were banished and the cult was suppressed by drastic measures. A proportion of the Bonpo (the followers of Bon) succumbed to the pressure and converted, another division fled the country, some were decapitated and their bodies thrown into the river. Yet during the whole period of persecution Tse Pongza remained a true believer in the traditional rites and tried by all means to drive back the influence of Guru Rinpoche.

To throw a bad light on her steadfastness, later Buddhist historians accused her of acting out of unrequited love, because Padmasambhava had coldly rejected her erotic advances. Whatever the case, the queen turned against the new religion with abhorrence. “Put an end to these sorcerers” — she is supposed to have said — “... If these sort of things spread, the people’s lives will be stolen from them. This is not religion, but something bad!” (Hermanns, 1956, p. 207). The following open and pointed rejection of Tantrism from her has also been preserved:

What one calls a kapala is a human head placed upon a stand;

What one calls basuta are spread-out entrails,

What one calls a leg trumpet is a human thighbone

What one calls the 'Blessed site of the great field'

is a human skin laid out.

What one calls rakta is blood sprinkled upon sacrificial pyramids,

What one calls a mandala are shimmering, garish colors,

What one calls dancers are people who wear garlands of bones.

This is not religion, but rather the evil, which India has taught Tibet.

(Hoffmann, 1956, p. 61)

With great prophetic foresight Tse Pongza announced: "I fear that the royal throne will be lost if we go along with the new religion" (Hoffmann, 1956, p. 58). History proved her right. The reign of the Yarlung dynasty collapsed circa one hundred years after she spoke these words (838) and was replaced by small kingdoms which were in the control of various Lamaist sects. But it was to take another 800 years before the worldly power of the Tibetan kings was combined with the spiritual power of Lamaism in the institution of the Dalai Lama, and a new form of state arose which was able to survive until the present day: the *tantric Buddhocracy*.

As far as we are aware, Tse Pongza, the courageous challenger of the Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava), has not yet been discovered as a precursor by feminism. In contrast, there is not a feminist text about Tibetan Buddhism in which great words are not devoted to the obedient servant of the guru, Yeshe Tsogyal (the contemporary of Tse Pongza and her counterpole). Such writings are also often full of praise for Padmasambhava. This is all the more surprising, because the latter — as the ethnologist and psychoanalyst, Robert A. Paul, has convincingly demonstrated and as we shall come to show in detail — must be regarded as a sexually aggressive, women and life-despising cultural hero.

### **Western feminism**

We can distinguish four groups in the modern western debate among women about tantric/Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan history:

1. The supporters, who have unconditionally subjected themselves to the patriarchal monastic system.
2. The radical feminists, who strictly reject it and unconditionally damn it.

3. Those women who strive for a fundamental reform so as to attain a partnership with equal rights within the Buddhist doctrine.
4. The feminists who have penetrated the system so as to make the power methods developed in Tantrism available for themselves and other women, that is, who are pursuing a gynocentric project.

Outside of these groups one individual towers like a monolith and is highly revered and called as a witness by all four: Alexandra David-Neel (1868–1969). At the start of this century and under the most adventurous conditions, the courageous French woman illegally traversed the Tibetan highlands. She was recognized by the Tibetans as a female Lama and — as she herself notes — revered as an incarnation from the “Genghis Khan race”. (quoted by Bishop, 1989, p. 229).

In 1912 she stood before the Thirteenth Dalai Lama as the first western woman to do so. Despite her fascination with Tibet and her in depth knowledge of the Lamaist culture she never allowed herself to become completely captivated or bewitched. When it appeared there would be a second audience with His Holiness, the Frenchwoman, the daughter of a Calvinist father and a Catholic mother, said : “I don't like popes. I don't like the kind of Buddhist Catholicism over which he presides. Everything about him is affected, he is neither cordial nor kind” (Batchelor, 1994, p. 311).

Alexandra David-Neel had both a critical and an admiring attitude towards Lamaism and the tantric teachings. She was also repulsed by the dirty and degrading conditions under which the people of Tibet had to live, and thus approved of the Chinese invasion of 1951. On the other hand, she was so strongly attracted to Tibetan Buddhism that she proved to be its most eager and ingenious student. We are indebted to her for the keenest insights into the shady side of the Lamaist soul. Today the author, who lived to be over 100, has become a feminist icon.

Let us now take a closer look at the four orientations of women towards Lamaism described above:

1. The supporting group first crystallized out of a reaction to the other three positions mentioned. It has solely one thing in common with a “feminist” stance, namely that it's proponents dare to speak out in matters of religion, which was very rarely permitted of Tibetan women in earlier times. The group forms so to speak the female peace-keeping force of patriarchal Buddhism. Among its members are authors such as Anne Klein, Carole Divine, Pema Dechen Gorap, and others. Their chief argument against the claim that women are oppressed in *Vajrayana* is that the teaching is fundamentally sexually neutral. The Dharma is said to be neither masculine nor feminine, the sexes forms of appearance in an illusionary world. Karma Lekshe Tsomo, a Buddhist nun of western origin, thus reacts to modern radical feminist current with the following words of rejection: “A growing number of women and also some men feel the need to identify enlightenment with a

feminine way. I reject the idea that enlightenment can be categorized into gender roles and identified with these at all. ... Why should the awareness be so intensely bound to a form as the genitals are?" (quoted by Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 11). With regard to the social situation of women in the Tibet of old, the authors of the first group proclaim, in comparison with those in other Asian countries they enjoyed the greatest freedoms.

2. The discrimination against the female sex in all historical phases of Buddhism is, however, so apparent that it has given rise to an extensive, in the meantime no longer surveyable, literature of feminist critiques, which very accurately and without holding back unmask and indict the system at all levels. For early Buddhism, it is above all Diana Y. Paul who has produced a sound and significant contribution. Her book, *Women in Buddhism*, has become a standard work in the meantime.

The sexual abuse of women in the modern Buddhist centers of the West has been made public by, among others, the American, Sandy Boucher. In many of these feminist critiques social arguments — one the one side an androcentric hierarchy, on the other the oppressed woman — are as frequent as theological and philosophical ones.

The points which the neo-shaman and Wicca Witch, Starhawk, brings against the Buddhist theory of suffering seem to us to be of such value that we would like quote them at length. Starhawk sees herself as a representative of the witch (Wicca) movement, as a feminist dakini: "Witchcraft does not maintain, like the First Truth of Buddhism, that 'all life is suffering'. On the contrary, life is a thing of wonder. The Buddha is said to have gained this insight [about suffering] after his encounter with old age, disease and death. In the Craft [i.e., the witch movement], old age is a natural and highly valued part of the cycle of life, the time of greatest wisdom and understanding. Disease, of course, causes misery but it is not something to be inevitably suffered: The practice of the Craft was always connected with the healing arts, with herbalism and midwifery. Nor is death fearful: It is simply the dissolution of the physical form that allows the spirit to prepare for new life. Suffering certainly exists in life — it is part of learning. But escape from the wheel of Birth and Death is not the optimal cure, any more than *hara-kiri* is the best cure of menstrual cramps." (quoted by Gross, 1993, p. 284).

This radical feminist critique naturally also extends to *Vajrayana*: the cynical use of helpless girls in the sexual magic rituals and the exploitation of patriarchal positions of power by the tantric gurus stand at the center of the "patriarchal crimes". But the alchemic transformation of feminine energy into a masculine one and the "tantric female sacrifice", both of which we discussed so extensively in the first part of our study, are up until now not a point of contention. We shall soon see why.

3. The authors Tsultrim Allione, Janice Willis, Joana Macy, and Rita M. Gross can be counted among the third “reform party”. The latter of these believes it possible that a new world-encompassing vision can develop out of the encounter between feminism and Buddhism. She thus builds upon the critical work of the radical feminists, but her goal is a “post-patriarchal Buddhism”, that is, the institutionalization of the equality of the sexes within the Buddhist doctrine (Gross, 1993, p. 221). This reform should not be imposed upon the religious system from outside, but rather be carried through in “the heart of traditional Buddhism, its monasteries and educational institutions” (Gross, 1993, p. 241). Rita Gross sees this linkage with women as a millennial project, which is supposed to continue the series of great stages in the history of Buddhism.

For this reason she needs no lesser metaphor to describe her vision than the “turning of the wheel”, in remembrance of Buddha’s first sermon in Benares where, with the pronouncement of the *Four Noble Truths*, he set the “wheel of the teaching” in motion. If, as is usual in some Buddhist schools, one sees the first turning as the “lesser vehicle” (*Hinayana*), the second as the “great vehicle” (*Mahayana*), and the third as Tantrism (*Tantrayana*), then one could, like Gross, refer to the connection of Buddhism and feminism as the “fourth vehicle” or the fourth turning of the wheel. “And with each turning,” this author says, “we will discover a progressively richer and fuller basis for reconstructing androgynous [!] Buddhism” (Gross, 1993, p. 155). Many of the fundamental Buddhist doctrines about emptiness, about the various energy bodies, about the ten-stage path to enlightenment, about emanation concepts would be retained, but could now also be followed and obeyed by women. But above all the author places weight on the ethical norms of *Mahayana* Buddhism and gives these a family-oriented twist: compassion with all beings, thus also with women and children, the linking of family structures with the *Sangha* (Buddhist community), the sacralization of the everyday, male assistance with the housework, and similar ideas which are drawn less from Buddhism as from the moderate wing of the women’s movement.

Like the Italian, Tsultrim Allione, Gross sees it as a further task of hers to seek out forgotten female figures in the history of Buddhism and to reserve a significant place for them in the historiography. She takes texts like the *Therigatha*, in which women in the *Hinayana* period already freely and very openly discussed their relationship to the teachings, to be proof of a strong female presence within the early phase of Buddhism. It is not just the lamas who are to blame for the concealment of “enlightened women”, but also above all the western researchers, who hardly bothered about the existence of female adepts.

She sees in Buddhist Tantrism a technique for overcoming the gender polarity, in the form of an equality of rights of course. One can say straight out that she has not understood the alchemic process whereby the feminine energy is sucked up during the tantric ritual. Like the male traditionalists she seizes upon the image of an androgyny (not that of a gynandry), of which she erroneously approves as a “more sexually neutral” state.

4. Fourthly, there are those women who wish to reverse the complex of sexual themes in Buddhism exclusively for their own benefit. The American authors, Lynn Andrews and, above all,

Miranda Shaw, can be counted among these. In her book, *Passionate Enlightenment — Women in Tantric Buddhism*, she speaks openly of a “gynocentric” perspective on Buddhism (Shaw, 1994, p. 71). Shaw thus stands at the forefront of western women who are attempting to transform the tantric doctrine of power into a feminist intellectual edifice. With the same intentions June Campbell subtitles her highly critical book, *Traveller in Space*, as being “In Search of Female Identity in Tibetan Buddhism”. She too renders tantric practices, which she learned as the pupil of the Kagyu master, Kalu Rinpoche, over many years, useful for the women’s movement. Likewise one can detect in the German Tibetologist, Adelheid Herrmann-Pfand’s study about the dakinis the wish to detect female alternatives within the tantric scheme of things.

But of all of these Miranda Shaw has the most radical approach. We shall therefore concentrate our attention upon her. Anybody who reads her impassioned book must gain the impression that it concerns the codification of a matriarchal religion to rival *Vajrayana*. All the feminine images which are to be found in Tantrism are reinterpreted as power symbols of the goddess. The result is a comprehensive world view governed by a feminine arch-deity. We may recall that such a matriarchal viewpoint need not differ essentially from that of an androcentric Tantric. He too sees the substance of the world as feminine and believes that the forces which guide the universe are the energies of the goddess. Only in the final instance does the *vajra* master want to have the last say.

For this reason the “tantric” feminists can without causing the lamas any concern reach into the treasure chest of *Vajrayana* and bring forth the female deities stored there, from the “Mother of all Buddhas”, the “Highest Wisdom”, the goddess “Tara”, to all conceivable kinds of terror dakinis. These formerly Buddhist female figures — the nurturing and protective mother, the helper in times of need, and the granter of initiations — apparently stand at the center of a new cult. Shaw can rightly draw attention to numerous cases in which women were inducted into the secrets of Tantrism as the dakinis of *Maha Siddhas*. It was they who equipped their male pupils with magic abilities. Their powers, the legends teach us, vastly exceeded those of the men. The tantra texts are also said to have originally been written by women. The ranks of the 84 official *Maha Siddhas* (great Tantrics) at any rate include four women, one of whom, Lakshminkara, is considered to be the founder of a teaching tradition of her own. In the more recent history of *Vajrayana* as well, “enlightened women” crop up again and again: the yoginis Niguma, Yeshe Tshogyal, Ma gcig, and others.

As evidence for the hypothesized power of women in Buddhist Tantrism the feminist side likes to parade the *Candamaharosana Tantra* with those passages in it in which the man is completely subordinate to the dictates of the woman. But the hymn to the goddess quoted in the following is still no more a sequence in the tantric inversion process, despite its depiction of the servitude of the male lover: as usual, in this case too it is not the female deity but rather the central male who is the victor in the guise of a guru. Here are the words, which the goddess addresses to her partner:

Place my feet upon your shoulders and  
Look me up and down  
Make the fully awakened scepter (Phallus)  
Enter the opening in the center of the lotus (Vagina)  
Move a hundred, thousand, hundred thousand times  
in my three-petaled lotus  
of swollen flesh.

(Shaw, 1994, pp. 155-156)

Shaw comments upon this erotic poem with the following revealing sentences: “The passage reflects what can be called a ‘female gaze’ or gynocentric perspective, for it describes embodiment and erotic experience from a female point of view. ... [The man] is instructed not to end the worship until the woman is fully satisfied. Only then is he allowed to pause to revive himself with food and wine — after serving the woman and letting her eat first, of course! Selfish pleasure-seeking is out of the question for him, for he must serve and please his goddess” (Shaw, 1994, p. 156). But the tantra is in fact dedicated to a wrathful and extremely violent male deity and differs from other texts solely in that the adept has set himself the difficult exercise of being completely sexually subordinate to the woman so as to then — in accordance with “law of inversion” — be able to celebrate an even greater victory over the feminine and his own passions. The woman’s role as dominatrix, which Shaw proudly cites, must also be seen as an ephemeral moment along the masculine way to enlightenment.

Yet Miranda Shaw sees things differently. For her it was women who invented and introduced Tantrism. They had always been the bearers of secrets. Thus nothing in the tantras must be changed in the coming “age of gynandry” other than that the texts once more lay the foundations for the supremacy of the woman, so that she can take up her former tantric post as teacher and grasp anew the helm which had slipped from her hands. From now on the man has to obey once more: “Tantric texts”, Shaw says, “specify what a man has to do to appeal to, please and merit the attention of a woman, but there are no corresponding requirements that a woman must fulfill” (Shaw, 1994, p. 70). At another point we may read that, “the woman may also see her male partner as a deity in certain ritual contexts, but his divinity does not carry the same symbolic weight. She is not required to respond to his divinity with any special deference, respect, or supplication or to render him service in the same way that he is required to serve her.” (Shaw, 1994, p. 47). In place of the absolute god, the absolute goddess now strides across the cosmic stage alone and seizes the long sought scepter of world dominion.

Such feminist rapprochements with *Vajrayana* Buddhism, however, prove on closer inspection to walk right into a well-disguised tantric trap. Precisely in the moment where the modern emancipated woman believes she has freed herself from the chains of the patriarchal system, she becomes without noticing even more deeply entangled in it. This effect is caused by the tantric “law of inversion”. As we know, within the logic of this law, the yogini must be elevated to a goddess before her defeat and domination at the hands of the guru, and the *vajra* master is under no circumstances permitted to recoil if she comes at him in a furious and aggressive form. In contrast, he is — if he takes the “law of inversion” seriously — downright obliged to “set fire to” the feminine, or better, to bring it to explosion. The hysterical terror dakinis of the rituals are just one of the indicators of the “inflaming” of female emotions during the initiations. In our analysis of the feminine inner fire (the *Candali*) as a further example, we showed how the “fire woman” ignited by the yogi stands in radical confrontation to him who has set fire to her, since she is supposed to burn up all of his bodily aggregates. On the astral plane the tantra master likewise uses the *feminine* “apocalyptic fire” (*Kalagni*) to reduce the cosmos to smoking rubble. The aggressively feminine, which can find its social expression in the form of radical gynocentric feminism, is thus a part of the tantric project. Who better represents a flaming, wrathful, dangerous goddess than a feminist, who furiously turns upon the fundamental principles of the teaching (the *Dharma*)?

If we consider the feminist craving for fire as an element of power in the work of such a prominent figure as the American cultural researcher Mary Daly, then the question arises whether such radical women have not been outwitted by the Tibetan yogis into doing their work for them. Daly even demands a “pyrogenetic ecstasy” for the new women and calls out to her comrades: „Raging, Racing, we take on the task of Pyrognomic Naming of Virtues. Thus lightning, igniting the Fires of Impassioned Virtues, we sear, scorch, singe, char, burn away the demonic tidy ties that hold us down in the Domesticated State, releasing our own Daimons/Muses/Tidal Forces of creation ... Volcanic powers are unplugged, venting Earth’s Fury and ours, hurling forth Life-lust, like lava, reviving the wasteland, the World” (Daly, 1984, p. 226). Such an attitude fits perfectly with the patriarchal strategy of a fiery destruction of the world such as we find in the Buddhist *Kalachakra Tantra* and likewise in the Christian *Book of Revelations*. In their blind urge for power, the “pyromaniac” feminists also set Mother Earth, whom they claim to rescue, on fire. In so doing they carry out the apocalyptic task of the mythic Indian doomsday mare, from whose nostrils the apocalyptic fire (*Kalagni*) streams and who rises up out of the depths of the oceans. They are thus unwilling chess pieces in the cosmic game of the ADI BUDDHA to come.

Let us recall Giordano Bruno’s statements about one of the fundamental features of a manipulator: the easiest person to manipulate is the one who believes he is acting in his own egomaniac interests, whilst he is in fact the instrument of a magician and is fulfilling the wishes of the latter. This is the “trick” (*upaya*) with which the yogi dazzles the fearsome feminine, the “evil mother”, and the dark *Kali*. The more they gnash their razor-sharp teeth, the more attractive they become for the tantra master. According to the “law of inversion” they play out a necessary dramaturgical scene on the tantric stage. As magic directors, the patriarchal yogis are not only prepared for an attack by radical feminism, but have also made it an element in their own androcentric development. Perhaps this is the reason why Miranda Shaw was allowed to conduct her studies in Dharamsala with the explicit permission of the Dalai Lama.

There are internal and external reasons for this unconscious but effective self-destruction of radical feminism. Externally, we can see how in contest with patriarchy they grasp the element of fire, which is also seen as a synonym of the term “power” by the followers of the great goddess. The element of water as the feminine counterpart to masculine fire plays a completely subordinate role in Daly’s and Shaw’s visions. Thus the force under which the earth already suffers is multiplied by the fiery rage of these women. *Avalokiteshvara* and *Kalachakra* are — as we have shown — fire deities, i.e., they feed upon fire even if or even precisely because it is lit by “burning” women.

The internal reason for the feminist self-destruction lies in the unthinking adoption of tantric physiology by the women. If such women practice a form of yoga, along the lines Miranda Shaw recommends, then they make use of exactly the same techniques as the men, and presume that the same energy conditions apply in their bodies. They thus begin — as we have already indicated — to destroy their female bodies and to replace it with a masculine structure. This is in complete accord with the Buddhist doctrine. Thanks to the androcentric rituals her femininity is dissolved and she becomes in energy terms a man.

Between March 30 and April 2, 2000, representatives from groups three and four convened in Cologne, Germany at a women-only conference. Probably without giving the matter much thought, the Buddhist journal *Ursache & Wirkung* [Cause and Effect] ran its report on the meeting at which 1200 female Buddhists participated under the title of “Göttinnen Dämmerung” [Twilight of the Goddesses] — which with its reference to the *götterdämmerung* signified the extinction of the goddesses (*Ursache & Wirkung*, No. 32, 2/2000).

Now whether the yogis can actually and permanently maintain control over the women through their “tricks” (*upaya*) is another question. This is solely dependent upon their magical abilities, over which we do not wish to pass judgement here. The texts do repeatedly warn of the great danger of their experiments. There is the ever-present possibility that the “daughters of *Mara*” see through the tricky system and plunge the lamas into hell. *Srinmo*, the fettered earth mother, may free herself one day and cruelly revenge herself upon her tormentors, then she too has meanwhile become a central symbol of the gynocentric movement. Her liberation is part of the feminist agenda. „One senses a certain pride”, we can read in the work of Janet Gyatso, „in the description of the presence of the massive demoness. She reminds Tibetans of fierce and savage roots in their past. She also has much to say to the Tibetan female, notably more assertive than some of her Asian neighbours, with an independent identity, and a formidable one at that. So formidable that the masculine power structure of Tibetan myth had to go to great lengths to keep the female presence under control. [... *Srinmo*] may have been pinned and rendered motionless, but she threatens to break loose at any relaxing of vigilance or deterioration of civilization” (Janet Gyatso, 1989, p. 50, 51).

### **The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the question of women's rights**

The relationship of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama to the female sex appears sincere, positive, and uninhibited. Leaving the tantric goddesses aside, we must distinguish between three categories of women in his proximity: 1. Buddhist nuns; 2. Tibetan women in exile; 3. Western lay women.

### *Buddhist nuns*

At the outset of our study we described the extremely misogynist feelings Buddha Shakyamuni exhibited towards ordained female Buddhists. In a completely different mood, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama succeeded in becoming a figure of hope for all the women assembled at the first international conference of Buddhist nuns in 1987 in Bodh Gaya (India). It was the *Kundun* and not a nun (*bhiksuni*) who launched proceedings with his principal speech. It surely had a deep symbolic/tantric significance for him that he held his lecture inside the local *Kalachakra* temple. There, in the holiest of holies of the time god, the rest of the nuns' events also took place, beginning each time with a group meditation. It is further noteworthy that it was not just representatives of Tibetan Buddhism who turned to the god-king as the advocate of their rights at the conference but also the nuns of other Buddhist schools. [8]

In his speech the *Kundun* welcomed the women's initiative. First up, he spoke of the high moral and emotional significance of the mother for human society. He then implied that according to the basic principles of *Mahayana* Buddhism, no distinction between the sexes may be made and that in *Tantrayana* the woman must be accorded great respect. The only sentence in which the *Kundun* mentioned Tantrism in his speech was the following: "It is for example considered an infringement when tantra practitioners do not bow down before women or step around them during their accustomed practice of the yoga [in their meditations]" (Lekshe Tsomo, 1991, p. 34). The Buddhist women present would hardly have known anything about real women (*karma mudras*) who participate in the sexual magic practices, about the ceremonial elevation of the woman by the lama so as to subsequently absorb her *gynergy*, or about the "tantric female sacrifice".

The Dalai Lama continued his speech by stressing the existence of several historical yoginis in the Indian and Tibetan traditions in order to prove that Buddhism has always offered women an equal chance. In conclusion he drew attention to the fact that the negative relationship to the female sex which could be found in so many Buddhist texts are solely *socially* conditioned.

When the decisive demand was then aired, that women within the Buddhist sects be initiated as line-holders so that they would as female gurus be entitled to initiate male and female pupils, the *Kundun* indicated with regret that such a *bhiksuni* tradition does not exist in Tibet. However, as it can be found in China (Hong Kong and Taiwan), it would make sense to translate the rules of those orders and to distribute them among the Tibetan nuns. In answer to the question — "Would they [then] be officially recognized as *bhiksunis* [female teachers]?" — he replied evasively — "Primarily, religious practice depends upon one's own initiative. It is a personal matter. Now whether the full ordination were officially recognized or not, a kind of social recognition would at any rate be present in the community, which is extremely important" (Lekshe Tsoma, 1991, p.

246). But he himself could not found such a tradition, since he saw himself bound to the traditional principles of his orders (the *Mulasarvastivada* school) which forbade this, but he would do his best and support a meeting of various schools in order to discuss the *bhiksuni* question. Ten years later, in Taiwan, where the “Chinese system” is widespread, there had indeed been no concrete advances but the *Kundun* once again had the most progressive statement ready: “I hope”, he said to his listeners, “that all sects will discuss it [the topic] and reach consensus to thoroughly pass down this tradition. For men and women are equal and can both accept Buddha’s teachings on an equal basis.” (*Tibetan Review*, May 1997, p. 13).

Big words — then the reformation of the repressive tradition of nuns dictated to by men is fiercely contested within Lamaism. But even if in future the *bhiksunis* are permitted to conduct rituals and are recognized as teachers in line with the Chinese model, this in no way affects the tantric rites, which do not even exist within the Chinese system and which downright celebrate the discrimination against women as a cultic mystery.

### *Tibetan women in exile*

As far as their social and political position is concerned, much has certainly changed for the Tibetan women in exile in the last 35 years. For example, they now have the right to vote and to stand as a candidate. Nonetheless, complaints about traditional mechanisms of suppression in the families are a major topic, which thanks to the support of western campaigners for women’s rights do not seldom reach a wider public. Nonetheless, here too the *Kundun* plays the reformer and we earnestly believe that he is completely serious about this, then he has had for many years been able to experience the dedication, skillfulness, and courage of many women acting for his concerns. All Tibetan women in exile are encouraged by the *Kundun* to participate in the business of state. The Tibetan Women’s Association, extremely active in pursuing societal interests, was also founded with his support.

Despite these outwardly favorable conditions, progress towards emancipation has been very slow. For example, the three permanent seats reserved for women in the parliament in exile could not be filled for a long period, simply because there were no candidates. (There are 130,000 Tibetans living in exile.) This has improved somewhat in the meantime. In 1990 the *Kundun* induced his sister, Jetsun Pema, to be the first woman to take up an important office in government. In 1996 eight women were elected to the public assembly.

Sometimes, under the influence of the western feminism, the question of women’s rights flares up fiercely within the exile Tibetan community. But such eruptions can again and again be successfully cut off and brought to nothing through two arguments:

1. The question of women's rights is of secondary nature and disrupts the national front against the Chinese which must be maintained at all costs. Hence, the question of women's rights is a topic which will only become current once Tibet has been freed from the Chinese yoke.
2. The chief duty of the women in exile is to guarantee the survival of the Tibetan race (which is threatened by extinction) through the production of children.

### *The Kundun's encounters with western feminism*

In the West the Dalai Lama is constantly confronted with emancipation topics, particularly since no few female Buddhists originally hailed from the feminist camp or later — the wave has just begun — migrated to it. As in every area of modern life, here too the god-king presents an image of the open-minded man of the world, liberal and in recent times even verbally revolutionary. In 1993, as critical voices accusing several lamas of uninhibited excessive and degrading sexual behavior grew louder, he took things seriously and promised that all cases would be properly investigated. In the same year, a group of two dozen western teachers under the leadership of Jack Kornfield met and spoke with His Holiness about the meanwhile increasingly precarious topic of "sexual abuse by Tibetan gurus". The *Kundun* told the Americans to "always let the people know when things go wrong. Get it in the newspapers themselves if needs be" (Lattin, Newsgroup 17).

In 1983, at a congress in Alpbach, Austria, His Holiness came under strong feminist fire and was attacked by the women present. One of the participants completely overtaxed him with the statement that, "I am very surprised that there is no woman on the stage today, and I would have been very glad to see at least one woman sitting up there, and I have the feeling that the reason why there are no female Dalai Lamas is simply that they are not offered enough room" (Kakuska, 1984, p. 61). Another participant at the same meeting abused him for the same reasons as "Dalai Lama, *His Phoniness!*" (Kakuska, 1984, p. 60).

The *Kundun* learned quickly from such confrontations, of which there were certainly a few in the early eighties. In an interview in 1996, for example, he described with a grin the goddess *Tara* as the "first feminist of Buddhism" (Dalai Lama XIV, 1996b, p. 76). In answer to the question as to why Shakyamuni was so disdainful of women, he replied: „2500 years ago when Buddha lived in India he gave preference to men. Had he lived today in Europe as a blonde male he would have perhaps given his preference to women" (*Tibetan Review*, March 1988, p. 17). His Holiness now even goes so far as to believe it possible that a future Dalai Lama could be incarnated in the form of a woman. "In theory there is nothing against it" (*Tricycle*, 1995, V (1), p. 39; see also Dalai Lama XIV, 1996b, p. 99). In 1997 he even enigmatically prophesied that he would soon appear in a female form: "The next Dalai Lama could also be a girl" (*Tagesanzeiger*, June 27, 1995).

According to our analysis of Tantrism, we must regard such charming flattery of the female sex as at the very least a non-committal, albeit extremely lucrative embellishment. But they are more

likely to be a deliberately employed manipulation, so as to draw attention away from the monstrosities of the tantric ritual system. Perhaps they are themselves a method (*upaya*) with which to appropriate the “*gynergy*” of the women so charmed. After all, something like that need not only take place through the sexual act. There are descriptions in the lower tantras of how the yogi can obtain the feminine “elixir” even through a smile, an erotic look or a tender touch alone.

It has struck many who have attended a teaching by the Dalai Lama that he keeps a constant and charming eye contact with women from the audience, and is in fact discussed in the internet: “Now it is quite possible”, Richard P. Hayes writes there regarding the “flirts” of the *Kundun*, “that he was making a fully conscious effort to make eye-contact with women to build up their self-esteem and sense of self-worth out of a compassionate response to the ego crushing situations that women usually face in the world. It is equally possible that he was unconsciously seeking out women's faces because he finds them attractive. And it could well be that he finds women attractive because they trigger his Anima complex in some way” (Hayes, Newsgroup 11). Hayes is right in his final sentence when he equates the female *anima* with the tantric *maha mudra* (the “inner woman”). With his flirts the *Kundun* enchants the women and at the same time drinks their “*gynergy*”.

The role of women in the sacred center of Tibetan Buddhism can only change if there were to be a fundamental rejection of the tantric mysteries, but to date we have not found the slightest indication that the *Kundun* wants to terminate in any manner his androcentric tradition which at heart consists in the sacrifice of the feminine.

Nevertheless, he amazingly succeeds in awakening the impression — even among critical feminists — that he is essentially a reformer, willing and open to modern emancipatory influences. It seems the promised changes have only not come about because, as the victim of a traditional environment, his hands are tied (Gross, 1993, p. 35). This pious wishful notion proves nothing more than the fascination that the great “manipulator of erotic love” from the “roof of the world” exercise over his female public. His charming magic in the meantime enables him to enthuse and activate a whole army of women for his Tibetan politics in the most varied nations of the world.

### *The “Ganachakra” of Hollywood*

Relaxed and carefree, with a certain spiritual sex appeal, the *Kundun* enjoys all his encounters with western women. As the world press confirms, the “modest monk” from Dharamsala counts as one of the greatest charmers among the current crop of politicians and religious leaders. „Any woman”, Hicks and Chogyam write in their biography of the Dalai Lama, „who has had been fortunate enough to be granted an audience will tell you what a charming host he is” (Hicks and Chogyam, 1990, p. 66). But Alexandra David-Neel had a completely different opinion of his previous incarnation, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, whom she described as stiff, obsessed by power, and heartless.

Just as a major film star is surrounded by enthusiastic fans, so too the Dalai Lama — at a higher level — attracts a crowd of enthusiastic male and female film stars. The proportion of world-famous actresses and singers in his “retinue” has notably increased in the meantime, and among them are to be found many of the most well-known faces: Sharon Stone, Anja Kruse, Uma Thurman, Christine Kaufmann, Sophie Marceau, Tina Turner, Doris Dörrie, Koo Stark, Goldie Hawn, Meg Ryan, Shirley MacLaine and a number of others count among them. “Even Madonna has ‘come out’ spiritually”, the *Spiegel* reflects, “The ‘Material Girl’ soon possibly a Tibet sister?” (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 109). “In Hollywood the leader of Tibet is currently revered like a god”, writes *Playboy* (*Playboy* [German edition], March 1998, p. 44).

But what motivates these international celebrities to join the *Kundun* and his tantric Buddhist teachings with such enthusiasm? We shall speak later about the male stars who are followers in particular, and thus in this section cast a glance at the famous women who have adopted the Buddhist faith in recent years. *Bunte*, a high-circulation German magazine, has attempted to identify the female stars’ motives for their change of faith. Alongside the usual descriptions of peace, calm, and quiet, we can also read the following:

"More and more women are turning to Buddhism, both in Europe and America. And when you look at them, you might think: hello, looks like she's had a facelift? — No, it's the teaching of Buddha which is making her desirable and attractive. Buddhism ... gives them peace — and peace is the basis of the harmony from which alone erotic love can grow. ... In the great religions of the world people, in particular women, are constantly under siege: from commandments, bans, taboos, guilt complexes and mystic visions of purgatory, Judgment Day, and hell. But Buddhism does not threaten, does not punish, does not damn. ... And then — the “boss”: Buddha is no invisible, punitive, wrathful or even loving god. He is a visible person ... a person, who has found his way and is therefore constantly smiling in likenesses of him. But you don't have to pray to him — you're supposed to follow him. For women, Buddha is not the omnipotent patriarch in heaven, but rather a living guru [!]. This makes him especially appealing to women. In Buddhism women do not have to deny their sensuality". Goldie Hawn, Hollywood sex comedian, rapturously claims, “I meditate and I feel sexy, I am sexy”. Anja Kruse, a German film star, enthuses that through Buddhism she has “gained more positive energy and erotic radiance”. The singer Laurie Andersen believes “Buddhism is so antiauthoritarian that it is attractive”. The actress Shirley MacLaine knows that “You learn that you are also god” (all quotations are from *Bunte*, no. 46, November 6, 1997, pp. 20ff.).

The manipulation of the feminine sense of the erotic can hardly be better demonstrated than through such articles. Here, the whole misogynist history of Buddhism is transformed into its precise opposite with a few snappy words. This is only one of the deceptions, however. The other is the fact that according to such statements Buddhism holds the *dolce vita* of the “rich and the beautiful” to be an elevated “spiritual” goal. “For Christians and Moslems”, it says further in *Bunte*, “paradise beckons from the beyond. Celebrities already have it on earth — completely in accord with the beliefs of Buddhism” (*Bunte*, no. 46, November 6, 1997, p. 22). The historical Buddha's

rejection of the comforts of life — an important dogma for his salvational way — is turned into its blatant opposite here: Buddhism, the stars would like us to believe, means luxury and complete independence.

This is deliberate and very successful manipulation. The western press is certainly not responsible for this alone. In that the Tibetan lamas further intensify the egocentricity and the secret wishes of the celebrity women and guarantee their fulfillment through Buddhism, they bring them under their control with a similar method (*upaya* = trick) to that with which they elevate the *karma mudras* (real women) to goddesses in their tantric rituals. Who as woman would not reach out for the offers which are promised them, according to *Bunte*, by the monks in orange robes: “Buddhism is eternal life. If one is lucky, eternal youth as well” (*Bunte*, no. 46, November 6, 1997, p. 22).

In light of the hells, the taboos, the day of judgement, the homelessness, the apocalyptic battle, the absolute obedience, the unconditional worship of the gurus, the patriarchal authority, the disdain for women and for life and much more of the like, with which the “true” doctrine is traditionally weighed down, the temptations offered by *Bunte* magazine are purely illusory, especially when we consider the harsh discipline and the strictness which must be borne in the Buddhist lamaseries. Perhaps one of the most famous Buddha legends has now been reversed: A future Buddha who wishes to attain enlightenment will no longer be tempted by the “daughters of *Mara*” (the daughters of the devil), rather, the “daughters of *Mara*” (the female stars of Hollywood) who are prepared to step out along the path to enlightenment are tempted by Buddha (the Dalai Lama). It only remains to hope that they like the historical Shakyamuni succeed in seeing through the sweet and charming “devil ghost” of the “sincere” and smiling *Kundun*.

If we adopt a tantric viewpoint then we may not rule out that all these famous women have in a most sublime manner been made a part of the worldwide *Kalachakra project* by the lamas. They form — if we may exaggerate slightly — a kind of symbolic *ganachakra* which is supposed to support the apotheosis of the Dalai Lamas (*Avalokiteshvara*) into the ADI BUDDHA. With the example of the pop singer Patty Smith we would like to demonstrate how finely and “cleverly” feminine energies can be steered by the *Kundun* in the meantime.

### ***Patty Smith and the Dalai Lama***



Already anticonventional to the point of radicalism in her youth, a great fan of the *poètes maudits* — Arthur Rimbaud, Federico Garcia Lorca, Jean Genet, William S. Burroughs and others, Patty Smith grew up in the *Factory* of Andy Warhol, where she learned her “antiauthoritarian” attitude to life. Anarchist and libertarian, she built a career upon a repertoire which opposed every social norm. *Outside of society is where I want to be* is the name of one of her most famous pieces. In the eighties her spouse and several of her closest friends died suddenly, which affected her deeply. In order to overcome her pain she turned to Tibetan Buddhism. She remembered having wept and prayed as a twelve-year-old girl at the fate of the Dalai Lama. But she first met the god-king in September 1995 in Berlin and was spellbound: ““I learned quite a bit from that man”, she later said, “he had to be constantly putting things into balance” (*Shambhala Sun*, July 1996).

The antiauthoritarian Patty Smith had met her master, in the face of the smiling *Kundun* she would hardly have thought that she had before her a pontiff whose history, ideology and visions opposed all of her libertarian and anarchic freedoms as their exact opposite. No — like a compliant *mudra* this social rebel bowed to the omnipotent tantra master, without asking where he came from, who he is, or where he is headed. In a poem she wrote about His Holiness she shows how unconditionally she as a woman submits to the divine guru and coming ADI BUDDHA. It opens with the lines

*May I be nothing  
but the peeling of a lotus  
papering the distance  
for You underfoot*

In this poem the entire sexual magic dramaturgy of Tantrism is played out in an extremely fine way. “Peeling” can suggest “peeling off” in the sense of “stripping naked so as to make love”. The “lotus” is a well-known symbol for the “vagina”. *Underfoot* also connotes being “under (his) control”. Patty Smith, the social rebel and poet of freedom has become an obedient dakini of the Tibetan god-king.

All these beautiful singers and actresses have forgotten or never even known about the heart of their nailed down sister, *Srinmo*, which still bleeds beneath the Jokhang (the sacred center of Tibetan Buddhism). The lamentations of the Tibetan earth mother, waiting to be rescued and freed from the daggers which nail her down, do not reach the ears of the unknowing film stars. Also forgotten are all the anonymous girls who over the course of centuries have had to surrender their feminine energies to the tantric clergy, so that the latter could construct its powerful Buddhocracy. *Palden Lhamo*, who still rides through a sea of boiling blood, driven by the terrible trauma of having murdered her son, is forgotten. The apocalyptic future which threatens us all if we follow the way to *Shambhala* is forgotten. These women — as many say of them — believe they have escaped the Christian churches and the “white pontiff” but have run directly into the net (in Sanskrit: *tantra*) of the “yellow pontiff”.

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### Footnotes:

[1] A terrible sister of the *Palden Lhamo* is the goddess *Ekajati*, the “Protector of the Mantra”. One-eyed and with only one tooth she dances on bodies covered in scratches, swinging a human corpse in one hand, and placing a human heart in her mouth with the other. As adornment she wears a chain of skulls. She is a kind of war goddess and is thus also worshipped under the name of “Magic Weapon Army”.

[2] But *Tara* like all Tibetan Buddhas and Bodhisattvas also has her terrible side. If this breaks out, she is known as the red *Kurukulla*, who dances upon corpses and holds aloft various weapons. A rosary of human bones hangs around her neck, a tiger skin covers her hips. In this form she is often surrounded by several wild dakinis. She is invoked in her cruel form to among other things destroy political opponents.

I prostrate to She crowned by a crescent moon

Her head ornament dazzlingly bright

From the hair-knot Buddha Amitabha

Constantly beams forth streams of light.

(Dalai Lama I, 1985, p. 130)

we can read in a poem to the wrathful *Tara* by the first Dalai Lama. Above all it is the Sakyapa sect who worships her in this wrathful form. She is considered to be the specific protective patroness of this order. It is most revealing that the “flesh-eating and horny” rock demoness, *Srinmo*, who seduced *Avalokiteshvara* and with him parented the Tibetan people, is also supposed to be an embodiment of *Tara*.

[3] To see *Mary* the Mother of God as an emanation of *Tara* is not historically justified; rather, the opposite would be more likely the case since the Tara cult is more recent than the cult of Mary. It was first introduced to Tibet in the eleventh century C.E. by the scholar Atisha.

[4] How closely enmeshed Yeshe Tshogyal was with the tantric dakini cult is revealed by the scenario of her “being called to her maker”. They are no angels to bring her to paradise following her difficult life, rather “huge flocks of flesh-eating dakinis, a total of twelve different types, who each consume a part of her human body: breath takers, flesh eaters, blood drinkers, bone biters, and so forth — followed by beasts of prey” (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, pp. 460, 461). Then spirits and demons appear. The queen of the night sings a song in honor of the yogini’s merits. This goes on for some nine days until she disappears as a blue light into a rainbow on the tenth day and leaves her ghostly flock to its sorrow.

[5] The names and life stories of a number of other yoginis from Tibetan history are known, and these biographies can be read in a book by the Italian, Tzultrim Allione. All these “practicing” women form so much of an exception in the total culture of Tibet that they primarily act to confirm the misogynist rule. The current intensive engagement with them is solely due to western feminism which is eagerly endeavoring to “win back” the tantric goddesses. Hence we refrain from presenting the Tibetan yoginis individually. In a detailed analysis of their lives we would at any rate have to return again and again to the tantric exploitation mechanisms which we described in the first part of our analysis.

[6] *Hua-yen* Buddhism, which propagates a Buddhocratic/totalitarian state structure, today enjoys special favor among American academics. The two religious studies scholars, Michael von Brück and Whalen Lai, see it as a none too fruitful yet exotic playing around, and in fact recommend turning instead to the “totalistic paradigm” of the Dalai Lama, which is said to be the living model of a Buddhocratic idea. This recommendation is meant in a thoroughly positive manner: “Yet Hua-yen is n longer a living tradition. ... This does not mean that a totalistic paradigm *could* not be repeated,” — and now one would think that the two western authors were about to pronounce a warning. But no, the opposite is the case — “but it seems more sensible to seek this in the *Tibetan Buddhist tradition*, then the Tibetan Buddhists have a living memory of a real ‘Buddhocracy’ and a living Dalai Lama who leads the people as religious *and* political leadership figure” (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 631).

[7] In connection with the relationship between the retention of semen and tantric power obsessions which we have dealt with at length in our book, it is worth mentioning that the weak willed Guangxu suffered from constant ejaculations. Every stress, even loud noises, made him ejaculate.

[8] In Bodh Gaya the nuns who attended founded the so-called *Sakyadhita* movement (“Daughters of Buddha”). This has in the meantime led to an international organization representing women from over 26 countries.

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### 3. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE TIBETAN BUDDHOCRACY

The cult drama of Tibetan/Tantric Buddhism consists in the constant taming of the feminine, the demoness. This is heralded already in the language. The Tibetan verb *dulwa* has the following meanings: to tame, subjugate, conquer, defeat; and sometimes: to kill, destroy; but also: to cultivate the land, civilize a nation, convert to Buddhism, bring up, discipline. Violent conquest and cultural activities thus form a unit for the Lamaist. The chief task of the Tibetan monastic state consists in the taming of wilderness (wild nature), the “heathen” barbarians, and the women. In tantric terminology this corresponds with the method (*upaya*) with which the feminine wildness (*Candali* or *Srinmo*) is defeated. Parallel to this, state Buddhism and social anarchy stand opposed to one another as enemies since the beginning of Tibetan history — they conduct their primordial struggle in the political, social, philosophical, divine, and cosmic arenas. Even though they battle to the bitter end, they are nonetheless — as we shall see — dependent upon one another.

#### The history of Buddhist state thought

The fundamental attitude of the historical Buddha was anarchist. Not only did he leave his family behind, the king’s son also laid aside all offices of state. With the founding of the Buddhist community (the *sangha*), he assumed that this was a purely spiritual union which was ethically far superior to worldly institutions. The *sangha* formed the basic pattern for an ideal society, whilst the secular state was constantly receiving karmic stains through its worldly business. For this reason the relationship between the two institutions (the *sangha* and the state) was always tense and displayed many discordances which had arisen even earlier — in the Vedic period — between *kshatriyas* (warriors and kings) and *brahmins* (priests).

However, the anti-state attitude of the Buddhists changed in the third century B.C.E. with the seizure of power by of the Emperor Ashoka (who ruled between 272–236 B.C.E.) Ashoka, a ruler from the Maurya dynasty, had conquered almost the entire Indian subcontinent following several terrible campaigns. He converted to Buddhism and set great store by the distribution of the religion of Shakyamuni throughout the whole country. In accordance with the teaching, he forbade animal sacrifices and propagated the idea of vegetarianism.

His state-political status is not entirely clear among the historians, then a number of contradictory documents about this are extant. In one opinion he and the whole state submitted to the rule of the *sangha* (the monastic community) and he let his decisions be steered by them. According to another document, he himself assumed leadership of the community and became a *sangharaja* (both king and supreme commander of the monastic community). The third view is the most likely — that although he converted to the Buddhist faith he retained his political autonomy and forced

the monastic community to obey his will as emperor. In favor of this view is the fact that it was he who summoned a council and there forced through his “Buddhological” ideas.

Up until today the idea of the just “king of peace” has been celebrated in the figure of Ashoka, and it has been completely overlooked that he confronted the *sangha* with the problem of state power. The Buddhist monastic community was originally completely non-coercive. Following its connection with the state, the principle of nonviolence necessarily came into conflict with the power political requirements this brought with it. For example, the historical Buddha is said to have had such an aversion to the death penalty that he offered himself as a substitute in order to save the life of a criminal. Ashoka, however, who proclaimed an edict against the slaughter of animals, did not renounce the execution of criminals by the state.

Whether during his lifetime or first due to later interpretations — the Emperor was (at any rate after his demise) declared to be a *Chakravartin* (world ruler) who held the “golden wheel” of the *Dharma* (the teaching) in his hands. He was the first historical Bodhisattva king, that is, a Bodhisattva incarnated in the figure of a worldly ruler. In him, worldly and spiritual power were united in one person. Interestingly he established his spiritual world domination via a kind of “cosmic sacrifice”. Legend tells how the Emperor came into possession of the original Buddha relic and ordered this to be divided into 84,000 pieces and scattered throughout the entire universe. Wherever a particle of this relic landed, his dominion spread, that is, everywhere, since at that time in India 84,000 was a symbolic number for the cosmic whole. [1] This pious account of his universal sovereignty rendered him completely independent of the Buddhist *sangha*.

In the *Mahayana Golden Shine Sutra*, a few centuries after Ashoka, the coercive power of the state is affirmed and presented as a doctrine of the historical Buddha. With this the anarchic period of the *Sangha* was finally ended. By 200 C.E. at the latest, under the influence of Greco-Roman and Iranian ideas, the Buddhist concept of kingship had developed into its fully autocratic form which is referred to by historians as “Caesaropapism”. An example of this is provided by King Kanishka from the Kushana dynasty (2nd century C.E.) In him, the attributes of a worldly king and those of a Buddha were completely fused with one another. Even the “coming” Buddha, *Maitreya*, and the reigning king formed a unit. The ruler had become a savior. He was a *contemporary* Bodhisattva and at the same time the appearance of the *coming* Buddhist messiah who had descended from heaven already in this life so as to impart his message of salvation to the people. (Kanishka cultivated a religious syncretism and also used other systems to apotheosize his person and reign.)

### **The Dalai Lama and the Buddhist state are one**

Tibet first became a centralized ecclesiastical state with the Dalai Lama as its head in the year 1642. The priest-king had the self-appointed right to exercise absolute power. He was *de jure* not just lord over his human subjects but likewise over the spirits and all other beings which lived “above and beneath the world”. One of the first western visitors to the country, the Briton S.

Turner, described the institution as follows: “A sovereign Lama, immaculate, immortal, omnipresent and omniscient is placed at the summit of their fabric. [!] He is esteemed the vice regent of the only God, the mediator between mortals and the Supreme ... He is also the center of all civil government, which derives from his authority all influence and power” (quoted by Bishop, 1993, p. 93).

Turner, who knew nothing about the secrets of Tantrism, saw the Dalai Lama as a kind of bridge (*pontifex maximus*) between transcendence and reality. He was for this author the governor for and the image of Buddha, his majesty appeared as the pale earthly reflection of the deity. This is, however, too modest! The Dalai Lama does not *represent* Buddha on earth, nor is he an intermediary, nor a reflection — he is the complete deity himself. He is a *Kundun*, that is, he is the presence of Buddha, he is a “living Buddha”. For this reason his power and his compassion are believed to be unbounded. He is world king and Bodhisattva rolled into one.

The Dalai Lama unites spiritual and worldly power in one person — a dream which remained unfulfilled for the popes and emperors of the European Middle Ages. [2] According to doctrine, the *Kundun* is the visible form (*nirmanakaya*) of this comprehensive divine power in time; he exists as the earthly appearance of the time god, *Kalachakra*; he is the supreme “lord of the wheel of time”. For this reason he was handed a golden wheel as a sign of his omnipotence at his enthronement. He is prayed to as the “ruler of rulers”, the “victor” and the “conqueror”. Even if he himself does not wield the sword, he can still order others to do so, and oblige them to go to war for him.

There was just as little distinction between power-political and religious organization in the Tibet of old as in the Egypt of the Pharaohs. As such, every action of the Tibetan god-king, regardless of how mundane it may appear to us, was (and is) religiously grounded and holy. The monastic state he governs was (and is) considered to be the earthly reflection of a cosmic realm. In essence there was (and is) no difference between the supernatural order and the social order. The two vary only in their degree of perfection, then the *ordo universalis* (universal order) which is apparent in this world is marred only by flaws due to the imperfection of humanity (and not due to any imperfection of the *Kundun*). Anarchy, disorder, revolt, famine, disobedience, defeat, expulsion are a matter of the deficiencies of the age, but never incorrect conduct by the god-king. He is without blemish and only present in this world in order to instruct people in the *Dharma* (the Buddhist doctrine).

### ***The state as the microcosmic body of the Dalai Lama***

Ashoka, the first Buddhist Emperor, was considered to be the incarnation of a Bodhisattva and probably as that of a *Chakravartin* (world ruler). His role as the highest bearer of state office was, however, not of a tantric nature. Fundamentally, he acted like every sacred king before him. His decisions, his edicts, and his deeds were considered holy — but he did not govern via control of his inner microcosmic energies. The pre-tantric *Chakravartin* (e.g., Ashoka) controlled the

cosmos, but the tantric world ruler is (e.g., the Dalai Lama) the cosmos itself. This equation of macrocosmic procedures and microcosmic events within the mystic body of the tantric hierarch even includes his people. The tantra master upon the Lion Throne does not just represent his people, rather — to be precise — he *is* them. The oft-quoted phrase “I am the state” is literally true of him.

He controls it — as we have described above- through his inner breath, through the movement of the ten winds (*dasakaro vasi*). His two chief metapolitical activities consist of the rite and the bodily control with which he secretly steers the cosmos and his kingdom. The political, the cultic, and his mystic physiology are inseparable for him. In his energy body he plays out the events virtually, as in a computer, in order to then allow them to become reality in the world of appearances.

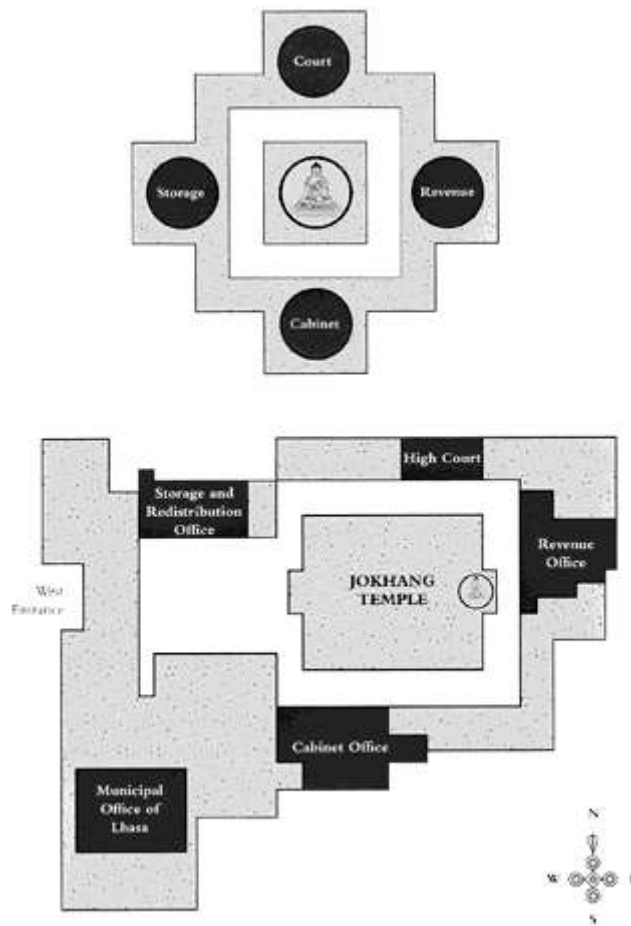
The tantric Buddhocracy is thus an interwoven total of cosmological, religious, territorial, administrative, economic, and physiological events. Taking the doctrine literally, we must thus assume that Tibet, with all its regions, mountains, valleys, rivers, towns, villages, with its monasteries, civil servants, aristocrats, traders, farmers, and herdsmen, with all its plants and animals can be found anew in the energy body of the Dalai Lama. Such for us seemingly fantastic concepts are not specifically Tibetan. We can also find them in ancient Egypt, China, India, even in medieval Europe up until the Enlightenment. Thus, when the *Kundun* says in 1996 in an interview that “my proposal treats Tibet as something like one human body. The whole Tibet is one body”, this is not just intended allegorically and geopolitically, but also tantrically (*Shambhala Sun*, archives, November, 1996). Strictly interpreted, the statement also means: Tibet and my energy body are identical with one another.

Tibet on the other hand is a microcosmic likeness of the sum of humanity, at least that is how the Tibetan National Assembly sees the matter in a letter from the year 1946. We can read there that “there are many great nations on this earth who have achieved unprecedented wealth and might, but there is only one nation which is dedicated to the well-being of humanity and that is the religious land of Tibet, which cherishes a joint spiritual and temporal system” (Newsgroup 12).

### ***The mandala as the organizational form of the Tibetan state***

There is something specific in the state structure of the historical Buddhocracy which distinguishes it from the purely pyramidal constitution of Near Eastern theocracies. Alone because of the many schools and sub-schools of Tibetan Buddhism we cannot speak of a classic leadership pyramid at the pinnacle of which the Dalai Lama stands. In order to describe in general terms the Buddhocratic form of state, S. J. Tambiah introduced a term which has in the meantime become widespread in the relevant literature. He calls it “galactic politics” or “mandala politics” (Tambiah, 1976, pp. 112 ff.) What can be understood by this?

As in a solar system, the chief monasteries of the Land of Snows orbit like planets around the highest incarnation of Tibet, the god-king and world ruler from Lhasa, and form with him a living mandala. This planetary principle is repeated in the organizational form of the chief monasteries, in the center of which a tulku likewise rules as a “little” *Chakravartin*. Here, each arch-abbot is the sun and father about whom rotate the so-called “child monasteries”, that is, the monastic communities subordinate to him. Under certain circumstances these can form a similar pattern with even smaller units.



***Mandala-pattern of the tibetan government (above) and the corresponding government offices around the Jokhang-Temple (below)***

A collection of many “solar systems” thus arises which together form a “galaxy”. Although the Dalai Lama represents an overarching symbolic field, the individual monasteries still have a wide ranging autonomy within their own planet. As a consequence, every monastery, every temple, even every Tulku forms a miniature model of the whole state. In this idealist conception they are all “little “ copies of the universal *Chakravartin* (wheel turner) and must also behave ideal-typically like him. All the thoughts and deeds of the world ruler must be repeated by them and ideally there

should be no differences between him and them. Then all the planetary units within the galactic model are in harmony with one another. In the light of this idea, the frequent and substantial disagreements within the Tibetan clergy appear all the more paradox.

Lhasa, Tibet's capital, forms the cosmic center of this galaxy. Two magnificent city buildings symbolize the spiritual and worldly control of the Dalai Lama: The *cathedral* (the Jokhang temple) his priesthood; the *palace* (the Potala) his kingship. The Fifth Dalai Lama ordered the construction of his residence on the "Red Mountain" (*Potala*) from where the Tibetan rulers of the Yarlung dynasty once reigned, but he did not live to see its magnificent completion. Instead of laying a foundation stone, the god-king had a stake driven into the soil of the "red mountain" and summoned the wrathful deities, probably to demonstrate here too his power over the earth mother, *Srinmo*, whose nailed down heart beats beneath the Jokhang.

Significantly, a sanctuary in southern India dedicated to *Avalokiteshvara* was known in earlier times as a "Potala". His Tibetan residence, which offers a view over all of Lhasa, was a suitably high place for the "Lord who looks down from above" (as the name of the Bodhisattva can be translated). The Potala was also known as the "residence of the gods".

Tibet is also portrayed in the geometric form of a Mandala in the religious political literature. „While it demonstrates hierarchy, power relations, and legal levels“, writes Rebecca Redwood French, „the Mandala ceaselessly pulsates with movement up, down and between its different parts“ (Redwood French, 1995, p. 179).

### *The mchod-yon relationship to other countries*

What form does the relationship of a *Chakravartin* from the roof of the world to the rulers of other nations take in the Tibetan way of looking at things? The Dalai Lama was (and is) — according to doctrine — the highest (spiritual) instance for all the peoples of the globe. Their relationship to him are traditionally regulated by what is known as the *mchod-yon* formula.

With an appeal to the historical Buddha, the Tibetans interpret the *mchod-yon* relation as follows:

1. The sacred monastic community (the *sangha*) is far superior to secular ruler.
2. The secular ruler (the king) has the task, indeed the duty, to afford the *sangha* military protection and keep it alive with generous "alms". In the *mchod-yon* relation "priest" and "patron" thus stood (and stand) opposed, in that the patron was obliged to fulfill all the worldly needs of the clergy.

After Buddhism became more and more closely linked with the idea of the state following the Ashoka period, and the “high priests” themselves became “patrons” (secular rulers), the *mchod-yon* relation was applied to neighboring countries. That is, states which were not yet really subject to the rule of the priest-king (e.g., of the Dalai Lama) had to grant him military protection and “alms”. This delicate relation between the Lamaist Buddhocracy and its neighboring states still plays a significant role in Chinese-Tibetan politics today, since each of the parties interprets them differently and thus also derives conflicting rights from it.

The Chinese side has for centuries been of the opinion that the Buddhist church (and the Dalai Lama) must indeed be paid for their religious activities with “alms”, but only has limited rights in worldly matters. The Chinese (especially the communists) thus impose a clear division between state and church and in this point are largely in accord with western conceptions, or they with justification appeal to the traditional Buddhist separation of *sangha* (the monastic community) and politics (Klieger, 1991, p. 24). In contrast, the Tibetans do not just lay claim to complete political authority, they are also convinced that because of the *mchod-yon* relation the Chinese are downright obliged to support them with “alms” and protect them with “weapons”. Even if such a claim is not articulated in the current political situation it nonetheless remains an essential characteristic of Tibetan Buddhocracy. [3]

Christiaan Klieger has convincingly demonstrated that these days the entire exile Tibetan economy functions according to the traditional *mchod-yon* (priest-patron) principle described above, that is, the community with the monks at its head is constantly supported by non-Tibetan institutions and individuals from all over the world with cash, unpaid work, and gifts. The Tibetan economic system has thus remained “medieval” in emigration as well.

Whether the considerable gifts to the Tibetans in exile are originally intended for religious or humanitarian projects no longer plays much of a role in their subsequent allocation. „Funds generated in the West as part of the religious system of donations,” writes Klieger, „are consequently transformed into political support for the Tibetan state” (Klieger, 1991, p. 21). The formula, which proceeds from the connection between spiritual and secular power, is accordingly as follows: whoever supports the politics of the exile Tibetans also patronizes Buddhism as such or, vice versa, whoever wants to foster Buddhism must support Tibetan politics.

### **The feigned belief of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in western democracy**

However authoritarian and undemocratic the guiding principles of the Buddhist state are, these days (and in total contrast to this) the Fourteenth Dalai Lama exclusively professes a belief in a western democratic model. Now, is the *Kundun's* conception of democracy a matter of an seriously intended reform of the old feudal Tibetan relations, a not yet realized long-term political goal, or simply a tactical ploy?

Admittedly, since 1961 a kind of parliament exists among the Tibetans in exile in which the representatives of the various provinces and the four religious schools hold seats as members. But the “god-king” still remains the highest government official. According to the constitution, he cannot be stripped of his authority as head of state and as the highest *political* instance. There has never, Vice President Thubten Lungring has said, been a majority decision against the Dalai Lama. The latter is said to have with a smile answered a western journalist who asked him whether it was even possible that resolutions could be passed against him, “No, not possible” (Newsgroup 13).

Whenever he is asked about his unshakable office, the *Kundun* always repeats that this absolutist position of power was thrust upon him against his express wishes. The people emphatically demanded of him that he retain his role as regent for life. With regard to the charismatic power of integration he is able to exercise, this was certainly a sensible political decision. But this means that the exile Tibetan state system still remains Buddhocratic at heart. Nonetheless, this does not prevent the *Kundun* from presenting the constitution finally passed in 1963 as being “based upon the principles of modern democracy”, nor from constantly demanding the separation of church and state (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993b, p. 25; 1996b, p. 30).

In the course of its 35-year existence the exile Tibetan “parliament” has proved itself to be purely cosmetic. It was barely capable of functioning and played a completely subordinate role in the political decision-making process. The “first ever democratic political party in the history of Tibet” as it terms itself in its political platform, the *National Democratic Party of Tibet* (NDPT), first saw the light of day in the mid nineties. Up until at least 1996 the “people” were completely uninterested in the democratic rules of the game (*Tibetan Review*, February 1990, p. 15). Politics was at best conducted by various pressure groups — the divisive regional representations, the militant *Tibetan Youth Association* and the senior abbots of the four chief sects. But ultimately decisions (still) lay in the hands of His Holiness, several executive bodies, and the members of three families, of whom the most powerful is that of the *Kundun*, the so-called “Yabshi clan”.

The same is true of the freedom of the press and freedom of speech in general. “The historian Wangpo Tethong,” exiled Tibetan opponents of the Dalai Lama wrote in 1998, “whose noble family has constantly occupied several posts in the government in exile, equates democratization in exile with the ‘propagation of an ideology of national unity’ and ‘religious and political unification’. This contradicts the western conception of democracy” (Press release of the Dorje Shugden International Coalition, February 7, 1998; translation). The sole (!) independent newspaper in Dharamsala, with the name of *Democracy* (in Tibetan: *Mangtso*), was forced to cease publication under pressure from members of the government in exile. In the *Tibet News*, an article by Jamyang Norbu on the state of freedom of the press is said to have appeared. The author summarizes his analysis as follows: “Not only is there no encouragement or support for a free Tibetan press, rather there is almost an extinguishing of the freedom of opinion in the Tibetan exile community” (Press release of the Dorje Shugden International Coalition, February, 7, 1998).

The Tibetan parliament in exile and the democracy of the exiled Tibetans is a farce. Even Thubten J. Norbu, one of the Dalai Lama's brothers, is convinced of this. When in the early nineties he clashed fiercely with Gyalo Thondop, another brother of the *Kundun*, over the question of foreign affairs, the business of government was paralyzed due to this dispute between the brothers (*Tibetan Review*, September 1992, p. 7). The 11<sup>th</sup> parliamentary assembly (1991), for instance, could not reach consensus over the election of a full cabinet. The parliamentary members therefore requested that His Holiness make the decision. The result was that of seven ministers, two belonged to the "Yabshi clan", that is, to the *Kundun's* own family: Gyalo Thondop was appointed chairman of the council of ministers and was also responsible for the "security" department. The Dalai Lama's sister, Jetsun Pema, was entrusted with the ministry of education.

In future, everything is supposed to change. Nepotism, corruption, undemocratic decisions, suppression of the freedom of the press are no longer supposed to exist in the new Tibet. On June 15, 1988, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama announced to the European Parliament in Strasbourg that upon his return a constitutional assembly would be formed in the Land of Snows, headed by a president who would possess the same authority as he himself now enjoyed. Following this there would be democratic elections. A separation of church and state along western lines would be guaranteed from the outset in Tibet. There would also be a voluntary relinquishment of some political authority vis-à-vis the Chinese. He, the Dalai Lama, would recognize the diplomatic and military supremacy of China and be content with just the „fields of religion, commerce, education, culture, tourism, science, sports, and other non-political activities" (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 234).

But despite such spoken professions, the national symbols tell another tale: With pride, every Tibetan in exile explains that the two snow lions on the national flag signify the union of spiritual and worldly power. The Tibetan flag is thus a visible demonstration of the Tibetan Buddhocracy. Incidentally, a Chinese *yin yang* symbol can be found in the middle. This can hardly be a reference to a royal couple, and rather, is clearly a symbol of the androgyny of the Dalai Lama as the highest tantric ruler of the Land of Snows. All the other heraldic features of the flag (the colors, the flaming jewels, the twelve rays, etc.), which is paraded as the coat of arm of a democratic, national Tibet, are drawn from the royalist repertoire of the Lamaist priesthood.

The *Strasbourg Declaration* of 1989 and the renunciation of autonomy it contains are sharply criticized by the *Tibetan Youth Congress* (TYC), the *European Tibetan Youth Association*, and the Dalai Lama's elder brother, Thubten Norbu. When the head of the *Tibetan Youth Congress* came under strong attack because he did not approve of the political decisions of the *Kundun*, he defended himself by pointing out that the Dalai Lama himself had called upon him to pursue this hard-line stance — probably so as to have the possibility of distancing himself from his *Strasbourg Declaration* (Goldstein, 1997, p. 139).

This political double game is currently intensifying. Whilst the god-king continues to extend his contacts with Beijing, the TYC's behavior is increasingly vocally radical. We have become too nonviolent, too passive, declared the president of the organization, Tseten Norbu, in 1998 (Reuters, Beijing, June 22, 1998). In the countermove, since Clinton's visit to China (in July 1998) the Dalai Lama has been offering himself to the Chinese as a peacemaker to be employed against his own people as the sole bulwark against a dangerous Tibetan radicalism: "The resentment in Tibet against the Chinese is very strong. But there is one [person] who can influence and represent the Tibetan people [he means himself here]. If he no longer existed the problem could be radicalized" he threatened the Chinese leadership, of whom it has been said that they want to wait out his death in exile (*Time*, July 13, 1998, p. 26).

Whatever happens to the Tibetan people in the future, the Dalai Lama remains a powerful ancient archetype in his double function as political and spiritual leader. In the moment in which he has to surrender this dual role, the idea, anchored in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, of a "world king" first loses its visible secular part, then the *Chakravartin* is worldly and spiritual ruler at once. In this case the Dalai Lama would exercise a purely spiritual office, which more or less corresponds to that of a Catholic Pope.

How the *Kundun* will in the coming years manage the complicated balancing act between religious community and nationalism, democracy and Buddhocracy, world dominion and parliamentary government, priesthood and kingship, is a completely open question. He will at any rate — as Tibetan history and his previous incarnations have taught us — *tactically* orient himself to the particular political constellations of power.

### *The democratic faction*

Within the Tibetan community there are a few exiled Tibetans brought up in western cultures who have carefully begun to examine the ostensible democracy of Dharamsala. In a letter to the *Tibetan Review* for example, one Lobsang Tsering wrote: „The Tibetan society in its 33-years of exile has witnessed many scandals and turmoils. But do the people know all the details about these events? ... The latest scandal has been the 'Yabshi vs. Yabshi' affair concerning the two older brothers of the Dalai Lama. [*Yabshi* is the family name of the Dalai Lama's relatives.] The rumours keep on rolling and spreading like wildfire. Many still are not sure exactly what the affair is all about. Who are to blame for this lack of information? Up till now, anything controversial has been kept as a state secret by our government. It is true that not every government policy should be conducted in the open. However, in our case, nothing is done in the open" (*Tibetan Review*, September 1992, p. 22). [4]

We should also take seriously the liberal democratic intentions of younger Tibetans in the homeland. For instance, the so-called Drepung Manifesto, which appeared in 1988 in Lhasa, makes a refreshingly critical impression, although formulated by monks: „Having completely eradicated the practices of the old society with all its faults," it says there. „the future Tibet will not

resemble our former condition and be a restoration of serfdom or be like the so-called 'old system' of rule a succession of feudal masters or monastic estates." (Schwartz, 1994, p. 127). Whether such statements are really intended seriously is something about which one can only speculate. The democratic reality among the Tibetans in exile gives rise to some doubts about this.

It is likewise a fact that the protest movement in Tibet, continually expanding since the eighties, draws together everyone who is dissatisfied in some way, from upright democrats to the dark monastic ritualists for whom any means is acceptable in the quest to restore through magic the power of the Dalai Lama on the "roof of the world". We shall return to discuss several examples of this in our chapter *War and Peace*. Western tourists who are far more interested in the occult and mystic currents of the country than in the establishment of a "western" democracy, encourage such atavisms as best they can.

For the Tibetan within and outside of their country, the situation is extremely complicated. They are confronted daily with professions of faith in western democracy on the one hand and a Buddhocratic, archaic reality on the other and are supposed to (the *Kundun* imagines) decide in favor of two social systems at once which are not compatible with one another. In connection with the still to be described *Shugden* affair this contradiction has become highly visible and self-evident.

Additionally, the Tibetans are only now in the process of establishing themselves as a nation, a self-concept which did not exist at all before — at least since the country has been under clerical control. We have to refer to the Tibet of the past as a *cultural community* and not as a *nation*. It was precisely Lamaism and the predecessors of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who now sets himself at the forefront of the Tibetan *Nation*, who prevented the development of a real feeling of national identity among the populace. The "yellow church" advocated their Buddhist teachings, invoked their deities and pursued their economic interests — yet not those of the Tibetans as a united people. For this reason the clergy also never had the slightest qualms about allying themselves with the Mongolians or the Chinese against the inhabitants of the Land of Snows.

### **The "Great Fifth": Absolute Sun King of Tibet**

Historians are unanimous in maintaining that the Tibetan state was the ingenious construction of a single individual. The golden age of Lamaism begins with Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682) and also ends with him. The saying of the famous historian, Thomas Carlyle, that the history of the world is nothing other than the biography of great men may be especially true of him. None of his successors have ever achieved the same power and visionary force as the "Great Fifth". They are in fact just the weak transmission of a very special energy which was gathered together in his person in the seventeenth century. The spiritual and material foundations which he laid have shaped the image of Tibet in both East and West up until the present day. But his *practical political* power, limited firstly by various Buddhist school and then also by the Mongolians and Chinese, was not at all so huge. Rather, he achieved his

transtemporal authority through the adroit accumulation of all *spiritual* resources and energies, which he put to service with an admirable lack of inhibition and an unbounded inventiveness. With cunning and with violence, kindness and brutality, with an enthusiasm for ostentatious magnificence, and with magic he organized all the significant religious forms of expression of his country about himself as the shining center. Unscrupulous and flexible, domineering and adroit, intolerant and diplomatic, he carried through his goals. He was statesman, priest, historian, grammarian, poet, painter, architect, lover, prophet, and black magician in one — and all of this together in an outstanding and extremely effective manner.

The *grand siècle* of the “Great Fifth” shone out at the same period in time as that of Louis XIV (1638–1715), the French sun king, and the two monarchs have often been compared to one another. They are united in their iron will to centralize, their fascination for courtly ritual, their constant exchange with the myths, and much more besides. The Fifth Dalai Lama and Louis XIV thought and acted as expressions of the same temporal current and in this lay the secret of their success, which far exceeded their practical political victories. If it was the concept of the seventeenth century to concentrate the state in a single person, then for both potentates the saying rings true: *l'état c'est moi* (“I am the state”). Both lived from the same divine energy, the all-powerful sun. The “king” from Lhasa also saw himself as a solar “fire god”, as the lord of his era, an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*. The year of his birth (1617) is assigned to the “fire serpent” in the Tibetan calendar. Was this perhaps a cosmic indicator that he would become a master of high tantric practices, who governed his empire with the help of the *kundalini* (“fire serpent”)?

In the numerous visions of the potentate in which the most important gods and goddesses of *Vajrayana* appeared before him, tantric unions constantly took place. For him, the transformation of sexuality into spiritual and worldly power was an outright element of his political program. Texts which he himself wrote describe how he, absorbed by one such exercise by a divine couple, slipped into the vagina of his wisdom consort, bathed there “in the red and white *bodhicitta*” and afterwards returned to his old body blissful and regenerated (Karmay, 1988, p. 49).

Contemporary documents revere him as the “sun and moon” in one person. (Yumiko, 1993, p. 41). He had mastered a great number of tantric techniques and even practiced his ritual self-destruction (*chod*) without batting an eyelid. Once he saw how a gigantic scorpion penetrated into his body and devoured all his internal organs. Then the creature burst into flames which consumed the remainder of his body (Karmay, 1988, p. 52). He exhibited an especial predilection for the most varied terror deities who supported him in executing his power politics.

The Fifth Dalai Lama was obsessed by the deliriums of magic. He saw all of his political and cultural successes as the result of his own invocations. For him, armies were only the executive organs of prior tantric rituals. Everywhere, he — the god upon the Lion Throne — perceived gods and demons to be at work, with whom he formed alliances or against whom he took to the field. Every step that he took was prepared for by prophecies and oracles. The visions in which *Avalokiteshvara* appeared to him were frequent, and just as frequently he identified with the “fire

god". With a grand gesture he dissolved the whole world into energy fields which he attempted to control magically — and he in fact succeeded. The Asia of the time took him seriously and allowed him to impose his system. He reigned as *Chakravartin*, as world ruler, and as the *Adi Buddha* on earth. Chinese Emperors and Mongolian Khans feared him for his metaphysical power.

One might think that his religious emotionalism was only a pretext, to be employed as a means of establishing real power. His sometimes sarcastic, but always sophisticated manner may suggest this. It is, however, highly unlikely, then the divine statesman had his occult and liturgical secrets written down, and it is clear from these records that his first priority was the control of the symbolic world and the tantric rituals and that he derived his political decisions from these.

His *Secret Biography* and the *Golden Manuscript* which he wrote (Karmay, 1988) were up until most recently kept locked away and were only accessible to a handful of superiors from the Gelugpa order. These two documents — which may now be viewed— also reveal the author to be a grand sorcerer who evaluated anything and everything as the expression of divine plans and whose conceptions of power are no longer to be interpreted as secular. There is no doubting that the "Great Fifth" thought and acted as a deity completely consciously. This sort of thing is said to be frequent among kings, but the lord from the roof of the world also possessed the energy and the power of conviction to transform his tantric visions into a reality which still persists today.

### The predecessors of the Fifth Dalai Lama

The organizational and disciplinary strength of the Gelugpa ("Yellow Hat") order formed the Fifth Dalai Lama's power base, upon which he could build his system. Shortly after the death of Tsongkhapa (the founder of the "Yellow Hats") his successors adopted the doctrine of incarnation from the Kagyupa sect. Hence the chain of incarnated forebears of the "Great Fifth" was fixed from the start. It includes four incarnations from the ranks of the Gelugpas, of whom only the last two bore the title of *Dalai Lama*, the first pair were accorded the rank posthumously.

The chain begins with Gyalwa Gendun Drub (1391–1474) , a pupil of Tsongkhapa and later the First Dalai Lama. He was an outstanding expert on, and higher initiand into, the *Kalachakra Tantra* and composed several commentaries upon it which are still read today. His writings on this topic, even if they never attain the methodical precision and canonical knowledge of his teacher, Tsongkhapa, show that he practiced the tantra and sought bisexuality in "the form of *Kalachakra* and his consort" (Dalai Lama I, 1985, p. 181).

His androgynous longings are especially clear in the hymns with which he invoked the goddess *Tara* so as to be able to assume her feminine form: "Suddenly I appear as the holy Arya Tara, whose mind is beyond samsara" he writes. "My body is green in color and my face reflects a

warmly serene smile ... attained to immortality, my appearance is that of a sixteen-year-old-girl" (Dalai Lama I, 1985, pp. 135, 138).

This appearance as the goddess of mercy did not, however, restrain him from following a pretty hard line in the construction of the legal system. He determined that prisons be constructed in all monasteries, where some of his opponents lost their lives under inhuman circumstances. The penal system which he codified was intransigent and cruel. Days without food and whippings were a part of this, just like the cutting off of the right hand in cases of theft or the death penalty for breach of the vows of celibacy, insofar as this took place outside of the tantric rituals. His severity and rigor nonetheless earned him the sympathy of the people, who saw him as the arm of a just and angry god who brought order to the completely deteriorated world of the monastic clergy.

The title *Dalai Lama* first appears during the encounter between the arch-abbot of Sera, *Sonam Gyatso* (1543–1588) and the Mongolian Khan, Altan. The prince of the church (later the Third Dalai Lama) undertook the strenuous journey to the north and visited the Mongols in the year 1578 at their invitation. He spent a number of days at the court of Altan Khan, initiated him into the teachings of the Buddha and successfully demonstrated his spiritual power through all manner of sensational miracles. One day the prince of the steppes appeared in a white robe which was supposed to symbolize love, and confessed with much feeling to the Buddhist faith. He promised to transform the "blood sea" into a "sea of milk" by changing the Mongolian laws. Sonam Gyatso replied, "You are the thousand-golden-wheel-turning *Chakravartin* or world ruler" (Bleichsteiner, 1937, p. 89).

It can be clearly gathered from this apotheosis that the monk conceded secular authority to the successor of Genghis Khan. But as an incarnated Buddha he ranked himself more highly. This emerges from an initiatory speech in which one of Altan's nephews compares him to the moon, but addresses the High Lama from the Land of Snows as the omnipotent sun (Bleichsteiner, 1937, p. 88). But the Mongol prince called his guest "Dalai Lama", a somewhat modest title on the basis of the translation usual these days, "Ocean of Wisdom". Robert Bleichsteiner also translates it somewhat more emotionally as "Thunderbolt-bearing World Ocean Priest". The god-king of Tibet thus bears a Mongolian title, not a Tibetan one.

At the meeting between Sonam Gyatso and Altan Khan there were surely negotiations about the pending fourth incarnation of the "Dalai Lama" (Yonten Gyatso 1589–1617), then he appeared among the Mongols in the figure of a great-grandchild of Khan's. Bleichsteiner refers to this "incarnation decision" as a "particularly clever chess move", which finally ensured the control of the "Yellow Hats" over Mongolia and obliged the Khans to provide help to the order (Bleichsteiner, 1937, p. 89). The Mongolian Fourth Dalai Lama died at the age of 28 and did not play a significant political role.

This was taken over by the powerful Kagyupa sect (the so-called “Red Hats”) at this stage in time. The “Red Hats” recruited their members exclusively from national (Tibetan) forces. They had attacked Sonam Gyatso’s (the III Dalai Lama’s) journey to the Mongols as treason and were able to continually expand their power political successes so that by the 1630s the Gelugpa order was only savable via external intervention.

Thus, nothing seemed more obvious than that the “Great Fifth” should demonstratively adopt the Mongolian title “Dalai Lama” so as to motivate the warlike nomadic tribes from the north to occupy and conquer Tibet. This state political calculation paid off in full. The result was a terrible civil war between the Kagyupas and the followers of the prince of Tsang on the one side and the Gelugpas and the Mongol leader Gushri Khan on the other.

If the records are to be trusted, the Mongol prince, Gushri Khan, made a gift of his military conquests (i.e., Tibet) to the Fifth Dalai Lama and handed over his sword after the victory over the “Red Hats”. This was not evaluated symbolically as a pacifist act, but rather as the ceremonial equipping of the prince of the church with secular power. Yet it remains open to question whether the power-conscious Mongol really saw this symbolic act in these terms, then *de jure* Gushri Khan retained the title “King of Tibet” for himself. The “Great Fifth” in contrast, certainly interpreted the gift of the sword as a gesture of submission by the Khan (the renunciation of authority over Tibet), then *de facto* from now on he managed affairs like an absolute ruler.

### *The Secret Biography*

The Fifth Dalai Lama took his self-elevation to the status of a deity and his magic practices just as seriously as he did his real power politics. For him, every political act, every military operation was launched by a visionary event or prepared for with a invocatory ritual. Nevertheless, as a Tantric, the dogma of the emptiness of all being and the nonexistence of the phenomenal world stood for him behind the whole ritual and mystic theater which he performed. This was the epistemological precondition to being able to control the protagonists of history just like those of the spiritual world. It is against this framework that the “Great Fifth” introduces his autobiography (*Secret Biography*) with an irony which undermines his own life’s work in the following verses:

The erudite should not read this work, they will be embarrassed.

It is only for the guidance of fools who revel in fanciful ideas.

Although it tries frankly to avoid pretentiousness,

It is nevertheless corrupted with deceit.

By speaking honestly on whatever occurred, this could be taken to be lies.

As if illusions of Samsara were not enough,

This stupid mind of mine is further attracted

To ultra-illusory visions.

It is surely mad to say that the image of the Buddha's compassion

Is reflected in the mirror of karmic existence.

Let me now write the following pages,

Though it will disappoint those who are led to believe

That the desert-mirage is water,

As well as those who are enchanted by folk-tales,

And those who delight in red clouds in summer.”

(Karmay, 1988, p. 27)

Up until recent times the *Secret Biography* had not been made public, it was a secret document only accessible to a few chosen. There is no doubting that the power-obsessed “god-king” wanted to protect the extremely intimate and magic character of his writings through the all-dispersing introductory poem. One of the few handwritten copies is kept in the Munich State Library. There it can be seen that the Great Fifth nonetheless took his “fairy tales” so seriously that he marked the individual chapters with a red thumbprint.

Everything about Tibet which so fascinates people from the West is in collected in the multilayered character of the Fifth Dalai Lama. Holiness and barbarism, compassion and *realpolitik*, magic and power, king and mendicant monk, splendor and modesty, war and peace, megalomania and humility, god and mortal — the pontiff from Lhasa was able to simplify these paradoxes to a single formula and that was himself. He was for an ordinary person one of the incomprehensibly great, a contradiction made flesh, a great solitary, upon whom in his own belief the life of the world hung. He was a mystery for the people, a monster for his enemies, a deity for his followers, a beast for his opponents. This ingenious despot is — as we shall later see — the highest example for the current Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

### ***The regent Sangye Gyatso***

The Fifth Dalai Lama did not need to worry about a successor, because he was convinced that he would be reincarnated in a child a few days after his death. Yet with wise foresight the time between his rebirth and his coming of age needed to be organized. Here too, the “Great Fifth”’s choice was a brilliant piece of power politics. As „regent” he decided to appoint the lama Sangye Gyatso (1653–1705) and equipped him with all the regalia of a king already in the last years of his life. He seated him upon the broad throne of the fearless lion as the executor of two duties, one worldly and one religious, which are appropriate to a great *Chakravartin* kingship, as a lord of heaven and earth (Ahmad, 1970, p. 43). The Dalai Lama thus appointed him world ruler until his successor (who he himself was) came of age. It was rumored with some justification that the regent was his biological son (Hoffmann, 1956, p. 176).

In terms of his abilities, Sangye Gyatso must be regarded not just as a skilled statesman, rather he was also the author of a number of intelligent books on such varied topics as healing, law, history, and ritual systems. He proceeded against the women of Lhasa with great intolerance. According to a contemporary report he is said to have issued a command that every female being could only venture into public with a blackened face, so that the monks would not fall into temptation.

So as to consolidate his threatened position during the troubled times, he kept the demise of his “divine father” (the Fifth Dalai Lama) secret for ten years and explained that the prince of the church remained in the deepest meditation. When in the year 1703 the Mongolian prince, Lhazang, posed the never completely resolved question of power between Lhasa and the warrior nomads and himself claimed regency over Tibet, an armed conflict arose.

The right wing of the Mongol army was under the command of the martial wife of the prince, Tsering Tashi. She succeeded in capturing the regent and carried out his death sentence personally. If she was a vengeance incarnation of *Srinmo* in the “land of the gods”, then her revenge also extended to the coming Sixth Dalai Lama, over whose fate we report in a chapter of its own.

### **The successors of the “Great Fifth”: The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Dalai Lamas**

The Seventh and Eighth Dalai Lamas only played a minor role in the wider political world. As we have already reported, the four following god-kings (The Ninth to the Twelfth Dalai Lamas) either died an early death or were murdered. It was first the so-called “Great Thirteenth” who could be described as a “politician” again. Although in constant contact with the modern world, Thubten Gyatso, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (1874–1933), thought and acted like his predecessor, the “Great Fifth”. Visions and magic continued to determine political thought and activity in Tibet after the boy moved into the Potala amid great spectacle in July 1879. In 1894 he took power over the state. Shortly before, the officiating regent had been condemned because of a black magic ritual which he was supposed to have performed to attack the young thirteenth god-king, and because

of a conspiracy with the Chinese. He was thrown into one of the dreadful monastery dungeons, chained up, and maltreated him till he died. A co-conspirator, head of a distinguished noble family, was brought to the Potala after his deeds were discovered and pushed from the highest battlements of the palace. His names, possessions and even the women of his house were then given to a favorite of the Dalai Lama's as a gift.

In 1904 the god-king had to flee to Mongolia to evade the English who occupied Lhasa. Under pressure from the Manchu dynasty he visited Beijing in 1908. We have already described how the Chinese Emperor and the Empress Dowager Ci Xi died mysteriously during this visit. He later fell out with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama with the Panchen Lama, [5] who cooperated with the Chinese and was forced to flee Tibet in 1923. The "Great Thirteenth" conducted quite unproductive fluctuating political negotiations with Russia, England, and China; why he was given the epithet of "the Great" nobody really knows, not even his successor from Dharamsala.

An American envoy gained the impression that His Holiness (the Thirteenth Dalai Lama) „cared very little, if at all, for anything which did not affect his personal privileges and prerogatives, that he separated entirely his case from that of the people of Tibetan, which he was willing to abandon entirely to the mercy of China" (Mehra, 1976, p.20) When we recall that the institution of the Dalai Lama was a Mongolian arrangement which was put through in the civil war of 1642 against the will of the majority of the Tibetans, such an evaluation may well be justified.

As an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*, the thirteenth hierarch also (like the "Great Fifth") saw himself surrounded less by politicians and heads of state than by gods and demons. David Seyfort Ruegg most astutely indicates that the criteria by which Buddhists in positions of power assess historical events and personalities have nothing in common with our western, rational conceptions. For them, "supernatural" forces and powers are primarily at work, using people as bodily vessels and instruments. We have already had a taste of this in the opposition between the god-king as an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* and *Guanyin* in the form of the Empress Dowager Ci Xi. Further examples in the coming chapters should show how magic and politics, war and ritual are also interwoven here.

Now what is the situation with regard to these topics and the living Fourteenth Dalai Lama? Has his almost 40--year exposure to western culture changed anything fundamental in the traditional political understanding? Is the current god-king free of the ancient, magical visions of power of his predecessors? Let us allow him to answer this question himself: in adopting the position of the Fifth Dalai Lama, the *Kundun* explained in an interview in 1997, "I am supposed to follow what he did" (Dalai Lama, HPI 006). As a consequence we too are entitled to accredit the Fourteenth Dalai Lama with all the deeds and visions of the great fifth hierarch and to assess his politics according to the criteria of his famous exemplar.

## Incarnation and power

Lamaism's particular brand of controlling power is based upon the doctrine of incarnation. Formerly (before the Communist invasion) the incarnation system covered the entire Land of Snows like a network. In Tibet, the monastic incarnations are called "tulkus". Tulku means literally the "self-transforming body". In Mongolia they are known as "chubilganes". There were over a hundred of these at the end of the nineteenth century. Even in Beijing during the reign of the imperial Manchus there were fourteen offices of state which were reserved for Lamaist tulkus but not always occupied.

The Tibetan doctrine incarnation is often misunderstood. Whilst concepts of rebirth in the West are dominated by a purely individualist idea in the sense that an individual progresses through a number of lifetimes on earth in a row, a distinction is drawn in Tibet between three types of incarnation:

1. When the incarnation as the emanation of a supernatural being, a Buddha, Bodhisattva, or a wrathful deity. Here, incarnation means that the lama in question is the embodiment of a deity, just as the Dalai Lama is an embodiment of *Avalokiteshvara*. The tulku lives from the spiritual energies of a transcendent being or, vice versa, this being emanates in a human body.
2. When reincarnation arises through the initiatory transfer from the master to the sadhaka, that is, the "root guru" (represented by the master) and the deities who stand behind him embody themselves in his pupil.
3. When it concerns the rebirth of a historical figure who reveals himself in the form of a new born baby. For example, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama is also an incarnation of the Fifth Dalai Lama.

The first and third concepts of incarnation do not necessarily contradict one another, rather they can complement each other, so that a person who has already died and deity can simultaneously be embodied in a person. But come what may, the deity has priority and supreme authority. It seems obvious that their bodily continuity and presence in this world is far better ensured by the doctrine of incarnation than by a natural line of inheritance. In a religious system in which the person means ultimately nothing, but the gods who stand behind him are everything, the human body only represents the instrument through which a higher being can make an appearance. From the deity's point of view a natural reproduction would bring the personal interests of a family into conflict with his or her own divine ambitions.

The incarnation system in contrast is impersonal, anti-genetic, and anti-aristocratic. For this reason the monastic orders as such are protected. through the rearing of a "divine" child it creates for itself the best conditions for the survival of its tradition, which can no longer be damaged by incapable heirs, family intrigues, and nepotism.

On a more fundamental symbolic level, the doctrine of incarnation must nevertheless be seen as an ingenious chess move against the woman's monopoly on childbirth and the dependence of humanity upon the cycle of birth. It makes things "theoretically" independent of birth and the woman as the Great Mother. That mothers are nonetheless needed to bring the little tulkus into the world is not significant from a Buddhological point of view. The women serve purely as a tool, they are so to speak the corporeal cradle into which the god settles down in the form of an embryo. The conception of an incarnated lama (*tulku*) is thus always regarded as a supernatural procedure and it does not arise through the admixture of the male and female seed as is normal. Like in the Buddha legend, where the mother of the Sublime One is made pregnant in a dream by an elephant, so too the mother of a Tibetan tulku has visions and dreams of divine entities who enter into her. But the role of the "wet nurse" is taken over by the monks already, so that the child can be suckled upon the milk of their androcentric wisdom from the most tender age.

The doctrine of reincarnation was fitted out by the clergy with a high grade symbolic system which cannot be accessed by ordinary mortals. But as historical examples show, the advantages of the doctrine were thoroughly capable of being combined now and again with the principle of biological descent. Hence, among the powerful Sakyapas, where the office of abbot was inherited within a family dynasty, both the chain of inheritance and the precepts of incarnation were observed. Relatives, usually the nephews of the heads of the Sakyapa order, were simply declared to be tulkus.

Let us consider the Lamaist "lineage tree" or "spiritual tree" and its relation to the tulku system. Actually, one would assume that the child recognized as being a reincarnation would already possess all the initiation mysteries which it had acquired in former lives. Paradoxically, this is however not the case. Every Dalai Lama, every Karmapa, every tulku is initiated "anew" into the various tantric mysteries by a master. Only after this may he consider himself a branch of the "lineage tree" whose roots, trunk, and crown consist of the many predecessors of his guru and his guru's guru. There are critics of the system who therefore claim with some justification that a child recognized as an incarnation first becomes the "vessel" of a deity after his "indoctrination" (i.e., after his initiation).

The traditional power of the individual Lamaist sects is primarily demonstrated by their lineage tree. It is the idealized image of a hierarchic/sacred social structure which draws its legitimation from the divine mysteries, and is supposed to imply to the subjects that the power elite represent the visible and time transcending assembly of an invisible, unchanging meta-order. At the origin of the initiation tree there is always a Buddha who emanates in a Bodhisattva who then embodies himself in a *Maha Siddha*. The roaming, wild-looking founding yogis (the *Maha Siddhas*) are, however, very soon replaced in the generations which follow by faceless "civil servants" within the lineage tree; fantastic great sorcerers have become uniformed state officials. The lineage tree now consists of the scholars and arch-abbots of the lama state.

## The “Great Fifth” and the system of incarnation

Historically, for the “yellow sect” (the Gelugpa order) which traditionally furnishes the Dalai Lama, the question of incarnation at first did not play such a significant role as it did, for example, among the “Red Hats” (Kagyupa). The Fifth Dalai Lama first extended the system properly for his institution and developed it into an ingenious political artifact, whose individual phases of establishment over the years 1642 to 1653 we can reconstruct exactly on the basis of the documentary evidence. The “Great Fifth” saw himself as an incarnation of the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara*. The embodiment of the Tibetan “national god” was until then a privilege claimed primarily by the Sakyapa and Kagyupa orders but not by the Gelugpa school. Rather, their founder, Tsongkhapa, was considered to be an emanation of the Bodhisattva *Manjushri*, the “Lord of Transcendental Knowledge”. In contrast, already in the thirteenth century the Karmapas presented themselves to the public as manifestations of *Avalokiteshvara*.

An identification with the Tibetan “national god” and first father, *Chenrezi* (*Avalokiteshvara*), was, so to speak, a mythological precondition for being able to rule the Land of Snows and its spirits, above all since the subjugation and civilization of Tibet were associated with the “good deeds” of the Bodhisattva, beginning with his compassionate, monkey union with the primal mother *Srinmo*. Among the people too, the Bodhisattva enjoyed the highest divine authority, and his mantra, *om mani padme hum*, was recited daily by all. Hence, whoever wished to rule the Tibetans and govern the universe from the roof of the world, could only do so as a manifestation of the fire god, *Chenrezi*, the controller of our age.

The “Great Fifth” was well aware of this, and via a sophisticated masterpiece of the manipulation of metaphysical history, he succeeded in establishing himself as *Avalokiteshvara* and as the final station of a total of 57 previous incarnations of the god. Or was it — as he himself reported — really a miracle which handed him the politically momentous incarnation list? Through a *terma* (i.e., a rediscovered text written and hidden in the era of the Tibetan kings) which he found in person, his chain of incarnations was apparently “revealed” to him.

Among the “forebears” listed in it many of the great figures of Tibetan history can be found — outstanding politicians, ingenious scholars, master magicians, and victorious military leaders. With this “discovered” or “concocted” document of his, the “Great Fifth” could thus shore himself up with a political and intellectual authority which stretched over centuries. The list was an especially valuable legitimation for his sacred/worldly kingship, since the great emperor, Songtsen Gampo, was included among his “incarnation ancestors”. In his analysis of the introduction of the *Chenrezi* cult by His Holiness, the Japanese Tibetologist, Ishihama Yumiko, leaves no doubt that we are dealing with a power-political construction (Yumiko, 1993, pp. 54, 55).

Now, which entities were — and, according to the Fifth Dalai Lama’s theory of incarnation, still are — seated upon the golden Lion Throne? First of all, the fiery Bodhisattva, *Avalokiteshvara*, then the androgynous time turner, *Kalachakra*, then the Tibetan warrior king, *Songtsen Gampo*,

then the Siddha versed in magic, *Padmasambhava* (the founder of Tantric Buddhism in Tibet), and finally the Fifth Dalai Lama himself with all his family forebears. This wasn't nearly all, but those mentioned are the chief protagonists, who determine the incarnation theater in Tibet. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, as the successor of the "Great Fifth" also represents the above-mentioned "divinities" and historical predecessors.

In an assessment of the Buddhocratic system and the history of Tibet, the power-political intentions of the two main gods (*Avalokiteshvara* and *Kalachakra*) must therefore be examined and evaluated in the first place so as to deduce the intentions of the currently living Dalai Lama on this basis. "It is impossible", the Tibetologist David Seyfort Ruegg writes, "to draw a clear border between the 'holy and the 'profane', or rather between the spiritual and the temporal. This is most apparent in the case of the Bodhisattva kings who are represented by the Dalai Lamas, since these are both embodiments of *Avalokiteshvara* ... and worldly rulers" (Seyfort Ruegg, 1995, p. 91).

If we assume that the higher the standing of a spiritual entity, the greater his power is, we must pose the question of why in the year 1650 the Fifth Dalai Lama confirmed and proclaimed the first Panchen Lama, Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltsen (1567–1662), his former teacher, as a incarnation of *Amitabha*. For indeed, *Amitabha*, the "Buddha of unending light", is ranked higher in the hierarchy than the Bodhisattva who emanates from him, *Avalokiteshvara*. This decision by the extremely power conscious god-king from Lhasa can thus only be understood when one knows that, as a meditation Buddha, *Amitabha* may not interfere in worldly affairs. According to doctrine, he exists only as a principle of immobility and is active solely through his emanations. Even though he is the Buddha of our age, he must nevertheless leave all worldly matters to his active arm, the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara*. Through such a division of responsibilities, a contest between the Panchen Lama and Dalai Lama could never even arise.

Nevertheless, the Panchen Lamas have never wanted to fall into line with the nonpolitical role assigned to them. In contrast — they have attempted by all available means to interfere in the "events of the world". Their central monastery, Tashi Lhunpo, became at times a stronghold in which all those foreign potentates who had been rebuffed by the Potala found a sympathetic ear. While negotiations were conducted with the Russians and Mongolians in Lhasa at the start of last century, Tashi Lhunpo conspired with the English and Chinese. Thus, the statesmanly autonomy of the Panchen Lama has often been the cause of numerous and acrid discordances with the Dalai Lama which have on several occasions bordered on a schism.

### **The sacred power of the Tibetan kings and its conferral upon the Dalai Lamas**

So as to legitimate his full worldly control, it seemed obvious for the "Great Fifth" to make borrowings from the symbolism of sacred kingship. The most effective of these was to present himself as the incarnation of significant secular rulers with the stated aim of now continuing their

successful politics. The Fifth Dalai Lama latched onto this idea and extended his chain of incarnations to reach the divine first kings from prehistoric times.

But, as we know, these were in no sense Buddhist, but rather fostered a singular, shamanist-influenced style of religion. They traced their origins to an old lineage of spirits who had descended to earth from the heavenly regions. Through an edict of the Fifth Dalai Lama they, and with them the later historical kings, were reinterpreted as emanations from “Buddha fields”. As proof of this, alongside a document “discovered” by the resourceful hierarch, a further “hidden” text (*terma*), the *Mani Kabum*, is cited, which an eager monk is supposed to have found in the 12th century. In it the three post powerful ruling figures of the Yarlung dynasty are explained to be emanations of Bodhisattvas: Songtsen Gampo (617–650) as an embodiment of *Avalokiteshvara*, Trisong Detsen (742–803) as an emanation of *Manjushri*, and Ralpachan (815–883) as one of *Vajrapani*. From here on they are considered to be bearers of the Buddhist doctrine.

After their Buddhist origins had been assured, the Tibetan kings posthumously took on all the characteristics of a world ruler. As *Dharmarajas* (kings of the law) they now represented the cosmic laws on earth. Likewise the “Great Fifth” could now be celebrated as the most powerful secular king reborn (Songtsen Gampo, who was likewise an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*) and through this could combine the *imperium* (worldly rule) with the *sacerdotium* (spiritual power). This choice legitimated him as national hero and supreme war lord and permitted a fundamental reform of the Lamaist state system which S. J. Tambiah refers to as the “feudalization of the church”.

The great military commander and tribal chief, Songtsen Gampo (617–650), who during his reign forged the highlands into a state of unprecedented size, was thus included into the Buddhist pantheon. Still today we can find impressive depictions of the feared warlord — usually in full armor, and flanked by his two chief wives, the Chinese Wen Cheng, and the Nepalese Bhrikuti.

The king is said to have commanded a force of 200,000 men. His conduct of war was considered extremely barbaric and the “red faces”, as the Tibetans were known by the surrounding peoples, spread fear and horror across all of central Asia. The extent to which Songtsen Gampo was able to extend his imperium roughly corresponds to the territory over which the Fourteenth Dalai Lama today still claims as his dominion. Hence, thanks to the “Great Fifth” the geopolitical dimensions were also adopted from the sacred kingship.

From the point of view of a tantric interpretation of history, however, the greatest deed of this ancient king (Songtsen Gampo) was the nailing down of the earth mother, *Srinmo*, and the staking of her heart beneath the holiest of holies in the land, the Jokhang temple. The “Great Fifth”, as a confirmed ritualist, would surely have considered the “mastering of the demoness” as the cause of Songtsen Gampo's historical successes. Almost a thousand years later he too would precede almost every political and military decision with a magic ritual.

One day, it is said, Songtsen Gampo appeared to him in a dream and demanded of him that he manufacture a golden statue of him (the king) in the “style of a *Chakravartin*” and place this in the Jokhang temple. When, in the year 1651, the “Great Fifth” visited locations at which the great king was once active, according to the chronicles flowers began to rain from the skies there and the eight Tibetan signs of luck floated through the air.

### **The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the question of incarnation**

On July 6, 1935, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was born as the child of ordinary people in a village by the name of Takster, which means, roughly, “shining tiger”. In connection with our study of the topic of gender it is interesting that the parents originally gave the boy a girl’s name. He was called *Lhamo Dhondup*, that is, “wish fulfilling goddess”. The androgyny of this incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* was thus already signaled before his official recognition.

The story of his discovery has been told so often and spectacularly filmed in the meantime that we only wish to sketch it briefly here. After the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, the then regent (Reting Rinpoche) saw mysterious letters in a lake which was dedicated to the protective goddess *Palden Lhamo*, which together with other visions indicated that the new incarnation of the god-king was to be found in the northeast of the country in the province of Amdo. A search commission was equipped in Lhasa and set out on the strenuous journey. In a hut in the village of Takster a small boy is supposed to have run up to one of the commissioners and demanded the necklace of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama which he held in his hands. The monk refused and would only give him it if the child could say who he was. “You are a lama from Sera!”, the boy is said to have cried out in the dialect which is only spoken in Lhasa. [6] Afterwards, from the objects laid out before him he selected those which belonged to his predecessor; the others he laid aside. The bodily examination performed on the child also revealed the necessary five features which distinguish a Dalai Lama: The imprint of a tiger skin on the thigh; extended eyelashes with curved lashes; large ears; two fleshy protuberances on the shoulders which are supposed to represent two rudimentary arms of *Avalokiteshvara*; the imprint of a shell on his hand.

For understandable reasons the fact that a Chinese dialect was spoken in the family home of His Holiness is gladly passed over in silence. The German Tibet researcher, Matthias Hermanns, who was doing field work in Amdo at the time of the discovery and knew the family of the young *Kundun* well, reports that the child could understand no Tibetan at all. When he met him and asked his name, the boy answered in Chinese that he was called “Chi”. This was the official Chinese name for the village of Takster (Hermanns, 1956, p. 319). Under difficult circumstances the child arrived in Lhasa at the end of 1939 and was received there as *Kundun*, the living Buddha. Already as an eight year old he received his first introduction into the tantric teachings.

Every little tulku who is separated from his family at a tender age misses the motherly touch. For the Fourteenth Dalai Lama this role was taken over by his cook, Ponpo by name. Not at the death of his mother, but rather at the demise of his substitute mother, Ponpo, the *Kundun* cried bitter tears. "He fed me," he said sadly, "most mammals consider the creature that feeds them as the most important in their lives, That was the way I felt about Ponpo. I knew my teachers were more important than my cook, but emotionally the strongest bond was with him" (Craig, 1997, p. 326).

In a discussion which the Dalai Lama later conducted with academics, he showed a keen interest in the maternal warmth and tender touching of the child as an important element in the development of personality. He became reflective as one (female ) speaker explained that the absence of such bodily contact in childhood could result in serious psychic damage to the person affected (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995, p. 319).

All young tulkus must do without all motherly contact in the purely masculine society of the monasteries and this may be an unspoken psychological problem for the whole Lamaist system. The Tibetan guru, Chögyam Trungpa has unintentionally captured this longing for contact with the family in the moving words of his „defiant poem“, *Nameless Child*: „Suddenly,” it says there „a Suddenly, a luminous child without a name comes into being. ... In the place where metal birds croak instantaneously born child can find no name... Because *he has no father*, the child has no family line. He has never tasted milk because *he has no mother*. He has no one to play with *because he has no brother and sister*. Having no house to live in, he has no crib. Since *he has no nanny*, he has never cried. There is no civilization, so he has no toys. ... Since there is no point of reference, *he has never found a self*” (quoted and *Italics* by June Campbell, 1996, p. 88). The poem is supposed to glorify the “instantaneously born child”, but it more resembles the despairing cry of a being who had to renounce the joys of childhood because it was tantrically turned into the vessel of a deity.

### **The introduction of the doctrine of incarnation to the West**

These days, the West is downright fascinated by the idea of reincarnation. In the last twenty years it has like lightning seized the awareness of millions. A large percentage of north Americans today believe in rebirth. Books upon the topic have become legion in the meantime. People are also fascinated by the idea that in the figure of a Tibetan lama they are face to face with a real “deity”. Thus, the concept of being reborn has become a powerful instrument in the Lamaist conquest of the West. Earlier, a few Europeans had already formed the idea that they were the reincarnation of former Tibetans or Mongolians. In theosophical circles such speculative incarnations were *en vogue*. A Tibetan lama also drew Alexandra David-Neel’s attention to the fact that she came from the race of Genghis Khan.

In 1985 it was discovered that the honorable Lama Yeshe had incarnated as the child of two Spanish parents. His Holiness commented upon the spectacular event in the following words: “[Buddhism] also provides many different methods to practice, understand and meditate, so it has

the attraction of the supermarket. So the fact that Lama Yeshe, whose main work was in the West, should be born in Spain, seems quite logical. Actually there are quite a few western reincarnated lamas now" (Mackenzie, 1992, p. 155).

The idea of western reincarnations is also cultivated by Bernardo Bertolucci's film, *Little Buddha*. The plot involves a lama who simultaneously embodies himself in a white boy from Seattle and, amazingly, in a girl as well.

An amusing anecdote, likewise from the world of film, brought the Tibetan doctrine of incarnation into discredit a little. Namely, the famous Aikido fighter and actor Steven Seagal announced he was the reincarnation of an important lama (*Chung-rag Dorje*), who had lived several centuries earlier and had made his name as a treasure hunter (*terton*). [7] It was not at all the case that Seagal had arbitrarily adopted his former identity, rather he was able to appeal to the confirmation of Penor Rinpoche, the head of the Nyingmapa school. This "revelation" raised many questions and some confusion among western Buddhists. There was speculation on the Internet as to whether Seagal had purchased the "incarnation title", whether this was not an act of religious political propaganda designed to exploit the actor's popularity, and much more. For others the incident was more embarrassing, since Seagal appeared in monastic robes shortly after his recognition. When he was in Bodhi Gaya in India at the beginning of the year 1997, he sat down upon the place where the historical Buddha experienced enlightenment, "giving his blessings to hundreds of baffled Tibetan monks" (*Time*, September 8, 1997, p. 65).

The action films in which Seagal plays the lead are considered the most brutal of the genre. "Scenes in which he rams a knife through his opponent's ear into his brain or tears out his larynx", says the journalist H. Timmerberg, "captivate through their apparent authenticity. He fights dispassionately, one could say he fights coldly, and when he kills neither hate nor anger are to be read in his eyes, at best contempt and a trace of amusement. Precisely the eyes of a killer, or the look of a Samurai. It could be both" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin* No. 28, July 16, 1999). Timmerberg also characterizes the star as "a grand master in the art of killing". Admittedly, in his last two films Seagal has made an effort to appear a bit more well-mannered, but it is not his religious obligations which have compelled him to do so. At least, this was the opinion of his master, Penor Rinpoche: "Some people think Steven Seagal cannot be a true Buddhist because he makes brutal films. This is not the case. Such films are pure entertainment and have nothing to do with that which is true and important. In the view of Buddhism compassionate beings incarnate in every kind of life so as to help their fellow people. Seen thus, of course a holy person can be an action star" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin* No. 28, July 16, 1999). Penor further informed the surprised journalist that tulku (the reincarnations of high lamas) liked to watch vampire films.

At the major *Kalachakra* event conducted this year (1999) by the Dalai Lama in Bloomington (USA), Seagal was the shooting star. He is said to have donated a meal for over a thousand

participants there. This time Richard Gere, the “god-king’s” second big draw, was not head of the celebrity bill. In fact, the two Buddhist stars cannot stand one another.

Such a sensational and liberal spread of incarnations in the West could, however, be of harm to the whole idea in future. The system has after all not just its strengths but also its weaknesses, which lie above all in the minority of the incarnated child, of whom one does not know exactly what will later happen with him, and who remains incapable of acting until his coming of age. Appointments by the Dalai Lama would probably be a much more effective means of ensuring his centralist power. In fact, there are for this reason discussions in the circles surrounding him about whether the reincarnation of monks is at all sensible. It would be better to give up the whole tulku system, Dahyö Kyabgö Rinpoche wrote in the *Tibetan Review*, since it has led to an uncontrollable inflation in the number of monastic reincarnations (*Tibetan Review*, July 1994, p. 13).

At times the *Kundun* has also speculated in public about whether it would not be politically more clever to name a successor rather than embodying himself anew. But he has not committed himself. At a conference of 350 tulkus in the year 1989 he announced that he would under no circumstance reincarnate in the territory under the control of the Chinese (*Tibetan Review*, January 1989, p. 5).

In all, the Dalai Lama is interested in a well-functioning incarnation elite, very small in number, which would be combined with an effective system of appointments. He knows that an overly liberal expansion or even a democratization of the idea of incarnation would completely undermine its exclusivity. Appointments and initiations by a guru are thus basically more important to him, but he would never want to give up the system as such, which exercises so a bewitching hold over the western imagination.

His answer to the question of whether he himself will reincarnate as Dalai Lama once more has for years been the same statement: “Should the Tibetan people still want a Dalai Lama after my death then a new Dalai Lama will also come. I shall at any rate not attempt to influence this decision in any manner. If my people should in the next years decide to make an end to old traditions, then one must accept that” (*Playboy*, German edition, March 1998, p. 44).

We must leave it to the judgment of our readers how seriously they take such a “democratic” solution to the question of tradition by the Tibetan Buddhocrats. That the gods bow to the will of the people is completely new, at least in the history of Tibet. But at any rate we shall not have to do without the “precious presence” (Tibetan: *Kundun*) of His Holiness in our next incarnations, even if he no longer appears in the form of a Dalai Lama. At the end of his interview with *Playboy* which we have already quoted from on a number of occasions, he gives his readers the following parting thought: “For as long as the cosmos exists, and as long as there are living creatures, I will

be present here so as to drive out the suffering of the world" (*Playboy*, German edition, March 1998, p. 44).

## The various orders of Tibetan Buddhism

Three of the four main schools which determined the religious life of Tibet were all formed in the period from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 14th century: The Sakyapa, the Kagyupa and the Gelugpa. The Nyingmapa in contrast has been in existence since the start of the ninth century. All four "sects" are still today the most important pillars of tantric culture. It was the ingenious work of the "Great Fifth" to like an alchemist distill the spiritual and political essence out of all the traditional orders and to impressively assimilate these into his institution as "Dalai Lama" — a power-political act, which is currently being repeated by his incarnation, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

### The Gelugpa order

The "Great Fifth" came from the Gelugpa order. Of all the Tibetan schools the so-called "Yellow Hats" were the most tightly organized. Their founder, the outstanding scholar Tsongkhapa (1357–1419), had begun with a moral campaign against the decline of the teaching and the dissolution in the monasteries. He forbade the consumption of intoxicating liquors, demanded the strict observance of celibacy, insisted upon a rigorous work discipline, improved the dress code and reformed the daily liturgy. Towards the end of his life he succeeded in arresting the general decadence in the various schools through the establishment of a new order. In keeping with his program, this was called *Gelugpa*, that is, "Followers of the path of virtue". Although there were precursors, in the final instance Tibetan Buddhism has the "virtuous" to thank for its Buddhocratic/clerical structure. The three "most scholarly" monasteries of the highlands belong to the "yellow church": Ganden, Drepung, and Sera. These "three jewels" of the spirit accommodated thousands of monks over centuries and were considered the most powerful religious and political institutions in the country alongside the Potala, the residence of the Dalai Lama, and Tashi Lhunpo, the seat of the Panchen Lama.

Like no other school, the "Yellow Hats" can be talked about as being scholastic. They possessed the best libraries, the best educational system, the most stringent training program. What they lacked was the fantasy and the often picturesque wildness of the other orders. The Gelugpas have not produced a single original work, but saw their mission rather as solely to study the already codified Buddhist texts, to prepare commentaries on these, and, in most cases, to learn them by heart. Even the sixteen volumes of Tsongkhapa's writings are commentaries upon the canonized literature found in the *Kanjur* ("translations of the word" of Buddha) and the *Tanjur* ("translation of the textbooks"). The strength of the Gelugpas thus lay not in their creativity, but rather in their superior political and organizational talents which they combined with the teachings of the tantras in an extremely effective manner. Despite his "puritanical" politics which earned him the title of the Tibetan Luther, Tsongkhapa was an outstanding expert in and commentator upon the tantric secret writings, especially the *Kalachakra* teachings. His pupils continued this tradition with extensive works of their own. This made the Gelugpa order a stronghold of the Time Tantra.

Tsongkhapa was “puritanical” only in the sense that he demanded absolute discipline and iron-clad rules in the performance of the sexual magic rites and in determining that they could only be conducted by celibate monks. Although he became an object of emotional reverence after his death, because of their precision and systematicity his commentaries upon the sacred love techniques seem especially cold and calculating. They are probably only the product of his imagination, then he himself is supposed to have never practiced with a real *karma mudra* (wisdom consort) — yet he wrote extensively about this. He saw in the tantric exercises an extremely dangerous but also highly effective practice which ought only be conducted by a tiny clerical elite after traversing a lengthy and laborious graduated path. The broad mass of the monks thus fell further and further behind in the course of the academic and subsequent tantric training, eventually forming the extensive and humble “lower ranks”.

It lay — and still lies — in the logic of the Gelugpa system to produce a small minority of intensively schooled scholars and an even smaller number of tantric adepts, whose energies are in the end gathered together in a single individual. The entire monastic “factory” is thus, in the final instance, geared to the production of a single omnipotent Buddhist deity in human form. In accordance with the metapolitical intentions of the *Kalachakra* teachings which, being its highest tantra, form the main pillar of the Gelugpa order, it must be the time god himself who rules the world as a patriarchal *Chakravartin* in the figure of the Dalai Lama. In the final instance, he is the ADI BUDDHA.

Although the *institution* of the Dalai Lama did not yet exist when the Gelugpa order was founded, its essence was already in place. Hence the “virtuous” built the “Asian Rome” (Lhasa) step by step, with the “yellow pontiff” (the *Kundun*) at its head. Thanks to their organizational talents they soon controlled the majority of central Asia. From the banks of the Volga and the Amur, from the broad steppes of inner Asia to the Siberian tundra, from the oases of the Tarim Basin, from the imperial city of Beijing, from the far Indian river valleys came streams of pilgrims, envoys, and tributary gifts to the god-king in Lhasa. Even his opponents recognized him as a spiritual force towering over all.

### *The Kagyupa order*

Whilst the Gelugpas began cooperating with the Mongolians very early on and regarded these as their protective power, we can more or less call the Kagyupas, with the Karmapa at their head, the national Tibetan forces (at least up until the 17<sup>th</sup> century). The first Dalai Lama was already caught up in military skirmishes with the “Red Hats” (Kagyupa). 150 years later and with the support of Prince Tsangpa, they had extended their power so far that the Gelugpas had good reason to fear for their lives and possessions. In the 1730s Tsangpa seized Lhasa and handed the holy temple, the Jokhang, over to the priests of the “Reds”. Even the powerful Gelugpa monastery of Drepung fell to his onslaught. In the course of these battles an unsuccessful assassination attempt on the Fifth Dalai Lama is said to have been carried out. In his stead, however, his biological mother was murdered.

In his hour of need the “Great Fifth” succeeded in forming an alliance with Gushri Khan (1582–1654), the chief of the Oirat Mongols. The Khan descended upon the “Land of Snows” with a force tens of thousands strong. A bloody “civil war” ensued, in which two admittedly worldly rulers, the king of the Tsang and Gushri Khan, faced one another on the open field, but behind whom, however, were hidden the real forces of the two most powerful monastic hierarchs in the country, the “Dalai Lama” and the “Karmapa”, the most influential religious leader within the circle of the Red Hats.

This civil war concerned more than worldly power. According to the tantric obsessions which drove both parties, the battle was for the world throne and control over the spirit of the times. (The “Red Hats” also practiced the *Kalachakra Tantra*.) During the conflict, the Dalai Lama visited the Ganden monastery and there above an altar saw the huge, grinning, and black face of a demon with many human heads flying into its gaping maw. He interpreted this vision as signaling final victory over the Kagyupas.

In accord with the laws of his ancestors, Gushri Khan intervened with ruthless violence. Through him, the interior of Tibet was, according to one of the “Red’s” documents, “turned into a land of hungry ghosts, like the Domains of the Lord of Death” (Bell, 1994, p. 125). We recall that as a incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* the Dalai Lama also represents the god of death, *Yama*.

The Mongol ordered that the leaders of the opposing force be sewn into fur sacks and drowned. In the year 1642, after much fierce resistance, the red order was finally defeated. Many Kagyupas were driven from their monasteries which were then turned into Yellow Hat sites, as had been the case in reverse before. A mass flight was the result. Sections of the defeated Red Hats emigrated to Sikkim and to Bhutan and joined forces with the local dynasties there.

Yet, being an intelligent despot the “Great Fifth” did not give in to a desire for revenge. He knew from history that the various Kagyupa factions did not form a united front. Hence, after his control had been secured he covered some of them with great honors, thus splitting their ranks. But he even went a step further. Namely, he invaded the mysteries of the Red Hats by taking over from them the “national” Bodhisattva, *Avalokiteshvara* (*Chenrezī*), as his personal incarnation god. This usurpation was — as we have already shown — a political master stroke.

### *The Nyingmapa order*

Because of his wild lifestyle, the founder of the Nyingmapa, the half-mythic yogi and magician, Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche), was thought to be a dubious character by the Gelugpas. Even

today, the name “Guru Rinpoche” provokes strong defensive reactions among some “Yellow Hats”. But the Fifth Dalai Lama adopted a completely different attitude in this case. Not only did he indicate that Padmasambhava was, as an emanation of *Avalokiteshvara*, an earlier incarnation of his, but he also felt himself to be almost magnetically attracted to the tantric practices which Guru Rinpoche had employed to gain control over the Land of Snows. The achievements of the king, Songtsen Gampo, in the military political domain are outstripped by those of Guru Rinpoche on a metapolitical/magical level. We shall return later to discuss the unconventional yogi’s deeds of conquest in detail.

Padmasambhava (eighth century) is the founding hero and the icon of the Nyingmapas, the oldest of the Buddhist schools. They elevated the sorcerer (*Siddha*) to such a high status that he was sometimes even ranked higher than the historical Buddha. Although the “Old”, as the Nyingmapas are known, had the patina of the original about them (they were the first), over the course of the centuries they nevertheless managed to draw the worst reputation of all upon themselves. As wandering beggars, unkempt and restless, they roamed Tibet, were considered licentious in sexual matters, and supplemented their alms through the sale of all manner of dubious magical pieces. The depravity and anarchy they cultivated, through which they expressed their contempt for the world (of *samsara*), nevertheless fostered their reputation as powerful magicians among the superstitious populace. In general they were not unpopular with ordinary people because (unlike the tightly organized monasteries of the other sects) they rarely demanded taxes or forced labor.

Their attitude towards the pre-Buddhist Bon cult and remnants of ancient shamanism was extremely relaxed, so that many unorthodox elements flowed into the religious practices of the Nyingmapa. For example, alongside the classic tantras they practiced the so-called *Dzogchen* method in which enlightenment can be achieved without lengthy preparations and graded progression. Sometimes they were mocked as vagrants, at others they were feared as powerful sorcerers. But it was above all the strict and “puritanical” Gelugpas who punished the “Old” with detestation and great contempt.

Here too, the “Great Fifth” felt and acted at complete odds to the dominant opinion among his own order. His own teacher had been an important Nyingmapa and he had been informed about their “heretical” writings in great detail. With great success he put to use the *terma* doctrine (concerning the discovery of old mystic texts) fostered in this school. But above all his especial interest was captured by the magic practices of the order, and *Golden Manuscript* which he wrote is an ingenious compendium of barbaric spells such as are taught by the Nyingmapas.

### ***The Sakyapa Order***

The “Great Fifth” learned his grand politics and the subtleties of diplomacy from the Sakyapas who, as powerful ecclesiastical princes, had cooperated with the Mongolians and the Chinese between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Like every school of Tibetan Buddhism, the Sakyapas were also tantric ritualists. 150 years after the founding of the first monastery (in 1073) the order had developed into one of the most influential institutions in Tibet at that time. Within it the foundations were laid for a “modern political science” which welded together the administration of state and international relations, transpersonal energy fields (the Tibetan “gods”) and the sexual magic ritual system into a single discipline — a combination which exerted a lifelong attraction over the Fifth Dalai Lama.

According to legend, one of the most important abbots of the monastery, the influential Sakya Pandita (1182–1251), is said to have been in correspondence with Genghis Khan. All that has been historically verified, however, is that almost two decades after the death of the great military leader, in the year 1244, he traveled to Mongolia so as to successfully establish Buddhism there as the state religion. In gratitude, Godan Khan appointed him vice regent of the Land of Snows.

This historic alliance was so important to the “Great Fifth” who lived 400 years later that he without ado declared himself to be an incarnation of Sakya Pandita’s nephew and successor, the similarly gifted statesman, Phagspa Lama (1235-1280). The latter’s meeting with Kublai Khan (1260–1294) shortly before the Mongol prince seized the Chinese throne was legendary. The future Emperor was so impressed by the knowledge and rhetoric of the lama that he adopted the Buddhist faith and even let himself be initiated into the *Hevajra Tantra*.

The “Great Fifth” correctly saw this historical encounter as a corner-stone of world politics which dovetailed perfectly into the foundations of his own global vision. He hence simply declared the conversations between himself and the Mongolian potentate, Gushri Khan, which took place in the year 1637 and which concerned the defeat of the Kagyupa order, to be the “incarnatory” continuation of the dialog which commenced in 1276 between Kublai Khan and the then powerful Phagspa Lama and continued afresh in the year 1578 between the Third Dalai Lama and Altan Khan. During the meeting with the god-king (the Fifth Dalai Lama), Gushri Khan is supposed to have recalled their previous joint “incarnation meetings” (as Kublai Khan and Phagspa Lama and as the Third Dalai Lama and Altan Khan). This example shows, how politics was conducted across the centuries. Death no longer played a role in these political events which were so important for Asia.

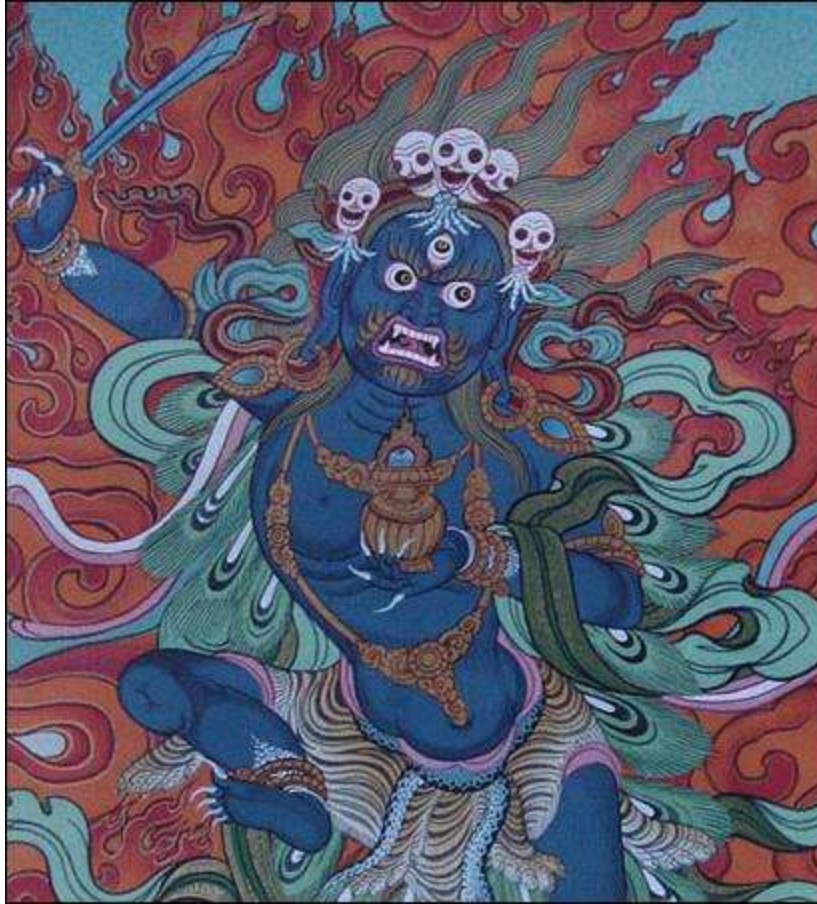
### *The Jonangpa order*

The no longer extant school (up until the 17<sup>th</sup> century) of the Jonangpas was a small but powerful offshoot of the Sakyapa order. During the “civil war” between the Gelugpas and the Kagyupas its followers allied themselves with the king of the Tsang (the “Red Hat” alliance). They were therefore branded as heretics by the “Great Fifth” and *de facto* destroyed. This is all the more surprising since an abbot of the school, the famous historian Taranatha (1575–1634), was asked by the parents of the Fifth Dalai Lama to name their child. However, it demonstrates once more

the unsentimental, uncompromising manner in which the god-king pursued his political goals. He ordered that the printing plates of the sect (i.e., their writings) be sealed and incorporated the order's funds along with the majority of its monks into the Gelugpa system. It is of interest that at that stage this school was the prime specialist in matters concerning the *Kalachakra Tantra*, to which Taranatha also devoted a number of writings. Perhaps a cause for the conflict can also be found here, then there can be no doubt that the "Great Fifth" took the cosmic power system of the Time Tantra literally and laid exclusive claim to it.

### *The Bon religion*

The eclectic on the Lion Throne (the Fifth Dalai Lama) was also not at all ill-disposed towards the pre-Buddhist Bon religion. *Avalokiteshvara* appeared to him in a vision and called upon him "to invite Bonpos often to carry out rituals which ensure the prosperity of the country." (Karmay, 1988, p. 64). This liaison is not quite as paradoxical as it may appear at first glance. Admittedly, the Bon priests had been fiercely persecuted as the exact opposite of Buddhism since time immemorial—over the centuries they had been reviled as the practitioners of black magic, the sacrificers of animals, the worshippers of demons. This negative Tibetan evaluation has been shared by many western researchers up until of late. However, more recent studies have shown that the Bon religion was closer to Buddhism than was previously thought. It is not — as is often erroneously believed — the original, shamanist religion of the highlands.



### **Bon – Dharmapala (Yeshe Walmo)**

Just like the Indian Buddhist gurus at a later time, the first Bonpos were brought into the country (in the sixth century, probably from Persia). They brought with them a marked doctrine of light unknown in Tibet, which is reminiscent of the *Amitabha* cult. They worshipped *Shen Rab*, a supernatural being who exhibits many of the criteria of an *Avalokiteshvara*, as a messianic savior. The Bon also believed in the existence of an inaccessible mythical kingdom, *Olmolungring*, which shares essential traits with *Shambhala*. The doctrine of emanation was likewise as familiar to them as a well-organized priesthood. They were even well versed in tantric practices and other yoga doctrines. The Tibetan lama Namkhai Norbu suspected that the famous Dzogchen meditation practice, through which enlightenment can be reached directly without intermediary stages, could be traced back to them. Both religions (that of the Buddhists and that of the Bonpos) worship the swastika as a cult symbol, but the widespread belief that the Bon followers only used the left-armed “evil” hooked cross and the Buddhist Tantrics the right-armed “good” one as a symbol is untrue.

Since the Bon religion was able to continue to exist following the Buddhization of the Land of Snows (since the seventh century) despite extreme persecution, the historians have until now

assumed that it took on many Buddhist elements so as to protect itself from pursuit. This is sure to have been the case here and there. But, it is becoming ever clearer on the basis of newly discovered documents that the original Bon cult possessed “Buddhist” elements from the outset, indeed, some important authors — such as David Snellgrove for example — even talk of a “heterodox” Buddha doctrine which penetrated the highlands via Persia and united with the local shamanist religion there. Where there is a real difference is in the approval of animal and occasional human sacrifices in the Bon cult. But then even this is supposed to be not entirely foreign to the tantric rites. There was thus no need for the “Great Fifth” to fear contact with the religion of the “black hat magicians”, as the Bonpo are sometimes called. His own system could only be strengthened through their “integration”.

Through his politics of integration the Fifth Dalai Lama demonstratively revealed that he saw himself as the ruler of all sects and all Tibetans, and that he was not striving to achieve absolute hegemony for the “yellow order” (the Gelugpas), but rather the unrestricted sovereignty of his own institution. Where the “Yellow Hats” were always wanting that the other schools be reduced to second or third-order powers; the Fifth Dalai Lama in contrast aspired to a situation where all schools equally bowed down before him as the supreme tantra master. Tensions with his own order were also preordained for another reason. Traditionally, the Gelugpas supplied the regent to the god-king who, once the “living Buddha” (*Kundun*) attained his majority, had to abdicate and renounce his power.

Let us summarize once more: It was the “Great Fifth”’s political intention to establish a Buddhocratic system in Tibet with the institution of the Dalai Lama at its helm. To achieve this he required all the material and spiritual resources of the country. From the Gelugpas he took the discipline, organizational talent, administrative skill, reasons of state, and learning; from the Kagyupas the doctrine of incarnation, his incarnation god *Avalokiteshvara*, and his national roots; from the Nyingmapas the ritual magic; from the Sakyapas the diplomatic skill; from the Jonangpas a well-organized *Kalachakra* system; and from the Bonpos the support of those ecclesiastical forces which had primarily propagated the idea of the ancient, sacred kingship, an idea which was vital for the establishment of the world throne on the Potala.

According to the laws of the micro/macroc cosmic conceptual world in which the Fifth Dalai Lama lived, he must have seen in his power politics a symbolic act which encompassed the entire cosmos: Once he had achieved absolute control over the Land of Snows (the microcosm), then, homologously, as *Chakravartin* he also had power over the whole world (the macrocosm). He ingeniously understood how to bundle together all the spiritual energies of the country within his person and the institution of the Dalai Lama which he occupied. He collected the most potent extracts from schools of every orientation and mixed them together in his magic cauldron into a potion of power, the consumption of which was supposed to grant him control over the universe.

Through his political application of the doctrine of incarnation, the fifth *Kundun* could with aplomb draw upon all the important political figures of Tibetan history and employed these as marionettes

in his cosmic theaters. He made the tantric idea the driving force of his age . It was not him as a person, but rather the gods he invoked, especially *Avalokiteshvara* and *Kalachakra*, the time god, who were the organizing principle, the creative, the one true thing, the ADI BUDDHA.

### **Unification of the Tibetan Buddhist orders under the absolute reign of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama**

It is almost uncanny how exactly the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has continued and intensified the integrative politics of his ingenious, unscrupulous, and highly revered predecessor from the 17<sup>th</sup> century which was aimed at strengthening his own position of power, only this time truly on a global scale. It is primarily the *Kalachakra Tantra* which serves as his most effective means of bringing the various sects into line. In the meantime each of the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism is committed to the Time Tantra and offers small scale *Kalachakra* initiations all around the world. On the official *Kalachakra homepage* in the Internet ([www.kalachakra.com](http://www.kalachakra.com)), the following “Dharma masters” are presented with photos as the most prominent contemporary “WARRIORS” of the time wheel:

1. Dalai Lama (Gelugpa)
2. Gelek Rinpoche (Gelugpa)
3. Chögyam Trungpa (Kagyupa)
4. Namkhai Norbu (Nyingmapa)
5. Jamgon Kongtrul (Kagyupa)
6. Minling Terchen Rinpoche (Nyingmapa)
7. Sharmapa Rinpoche (Kagyupa)
8. Tai Situ Rinpoche (Kagyupa)
9. Thrangu Rinpoche (Kagyupa)
10. Tsem Tulku (Gelugpa)
11. Zurman Garwang Rinpoche (Kagyupa)
12. Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche (Nyingmapa)
13. Sakya Trizin (Sakyapa)
14. Dzongsar Khyentse (Nyingmapa)
15. Sogyal Rinpoche (Rime Tradition)
16. Tulku Urgyen (Nyingmapa)
17. Gelek Rinpoche (Gelugpa)
18. Kalsang Rinpoche (Kagyupa)
19. Nan Huai Chin (Kagyupa and Chan)
20. Rev Shen Yan (?)
21. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (Bon)
22. Thrinly Norbu Rinpoche (Nyingmapa)
23. Tsoknyi Rinpoche (Kagyupa)
24. Lama Choedak (Sakyapa)
25. Ani Choying Drolma (Arya Tara School)

It is immediately apparent from this summary that of the 25 high lamas who publicly represent the *Kalachakra Tantra*, there is only four Gelugpa masters. This is astounding indeed.

His unique exiled situation allows the fourteenth *Kundun* to set himself up as the head of all the schools even more than the “Great Fifth”. This is not just true on the level of practical politics as head of state, but also in the initiatory system. Hence His Holiness allowed himself to be initiated into all the significant lineages of the various sects. In 1986 a Nyingmapa teacher initiated him into his tradition. His Holiness also received a tantric initiation at the hands of the highest master of the Sakyapa sect. It was a Nyingmapa lama, Lopon Tsechu Rinpoche, who in 1994 presided over the erection of the first, thirteen-meter high *Kalachakra* stupa in the West (in Spain).

Traditionally, the Gelugpas were the only ones who had any real influence on the affairs of state — primarily through the position of the “regents”, who were selected from their ranks and conducted the business of state until the Dalai Lamas came of age. In the face of a superior *Kundun*, the “Yellow Hats” are now set on the same level as the other sects. Their privileges have disappeared. „Today the activities of His Holiness the Dalai Lama serve the whole world and all of Tibetan Buddhism as well as the indigenous Bön faith impartially”, an official statement from Dharamsala says, „The inclinations of the Gelug monasteries to continue to link themselves with the government, even administratively, causes damage and obstacles rather than benefit and support for His Holiness and the exile government” (*Tibetan Review*, July 1994, p. 12).

The god-king's claim to spiritually and politically represent all sects has, just as in the past with the “Great Fifth”, in recent times led to a spirited protest movement amidst the ranks of his own order (Gelugpa), whose power is reduced by this. From this wing, the *Kundun* is accused of creating a “religious hotchpotch” or his personal ambitions are even openly designated. “According to my understanding”, writes Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, a bitter opponent of the god-king from his own ranks (he is an ordained Gelugpa monk), “the Dalai Lama's main wish is to integrate the four Tibetan traditions into one. The leaders of the other traditions will gradually disappear, leaving him alone as head of Tibetan Buddhism. In this way he will be able to control all aspects of Tibetan Buddhism. In the beginning this plan was rejected by the leaders of Sakya, Kagyu and Nyingma Traditions, while the Gelugpa remained neutral. Later, the Dalai Lama changed his approach. He is now trying to destroy the practice of *Dorje Shugden* and change the Gelug tradition, while at the same time developing a close relationship with the other traditions, especially the Nyingmapa. Gradually he hopes to fulfill his wishes in this way” (Gyatso, Newsgroup 7).

According to Kelsang Gyatso, the *Kundun* is supposed to have held a number of meetings with the head abbots of the four main schools in the early 1960s at which he proposed uniting the sects under his leadership. This proposal was rejected. The Sakyapa, Kagyupa, and Nyingmapa then joined together in 13 exile-Tibetan establishments so as to protect themselves from the imposition of the Dalai Lama's will. The leader of all 13, Gongtang Tsultrim, was murdered under

mysterious circumstances. To date the murder case has still not been solved (Sky Warrior, Newsgroup 18).

It has in the meantime become established practice that for all incarnations of great lamas, regardless of sect, the *Kundun's* confirmation is sought as the final word. This was not the case in the past. Free from any competition, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama outshines all other hierarchs from the Land of Snows. Even his often abrasive political/religious rivalry with the pro-China Panchen Lama no longer exists, since the latter died in 1989.

The *Rime* movement, which began in the 19th century and has as its goal a united church in which all schools are absorbed (retaining certain individual features), is also a boon to the absolutism of the god-king. Even the Bon priests in exile have in the meantime recognized the *Kundun* as their *de facto* authority. Like his predecessor from the 17th century (the "Great Fifth"), he maintains good contacts with them and prays in their monasteries.

"The Dalai Lama", one of his Buddhist opponents polemicizes, "tries to teach everything: Kagyu, Nyingma, Sakya, Gelugpa, Bonpo, and recently he even gave teachings on Christianity! Later may be he will teach on Sufism, Hinduism, Shamanism and so on. What is his motivation here? It is clear to me that his motivation is to gather as many disciples as possible from all these different traditions. In this way he will become their root guru and thereby gain more power and control" (Sky Warrior, Newsgroup 18). Hence, his followers celebrate him not just as the "supreme spiritual and worldly leader of six million Tibetans", but likewise as the "Head of Buddhists World Wide" (Ron, Newsgroup 14). In a resolution of the *Tibetan Cholsum Convention*, of which representatives from all (!) organizations of Tibetans in exile are members and which was held from August 27 to 31, 1998, it says: "He [The Dalai Lama] is the Captain of Peace in the world; he is the overall head of all Buddhist traditions on this earth; he is the master acclaimed by all the religious traditions of the world".

### **The "Karmapa affair"**

A spectacular example of how the *Kundun* is able to turn the divisions within the other sects to his advantage is offered by the so-called "Karmapa affair". The turbulent events played out between various factions within the Kagyupa sect since the start of the nineties have included radical confrontations and court cases, violent brawls and accusations and counter-accusations of murder.

The cause of this un-Buddhist disagreement was that in the search for the 17<sup>th</sup> incarnation of the new Karmapa, the leader of the Kagyupa, two principal candidates and their proponents confronted one another — on the one side, Situ Rinpoche and Gyaltsab Rinpoche, who advocated

a youth in Tibet, on the other, Shamar Rinpoche, who proposed a boy in India. Shortly before the decision, a third abbot, Jamgon Kongtrol Rinpoche, whose voice would have been very influential in the choice, was the victim of a mysterious fatal car accident. Shortly afterwards, the remaining parties accused one another of having brought about the death of Jamgon Kongtrol via magical manipulation. Brawls between the two monastic factions and bloody heads resulted in India, shots were even exchanged, so that the Indian police were forced to intervene (Nesterenko, 1992).

Situ Rinpoche advocated a Sino-Tibetan boy (Urgyen Trinley) as his Karmapa candidate, who also had the support of the *Kundun* and the Tibetan government in exile. Shamar Rinpoche, however, presented his own Karmapa (Thaye Dorje) to the public in Delhi on March 17, 1994. Since that time a great rift has divided the Kagyupa lineage, affecting the numerous groups of western believers as well. Superficially, one could gain the impression that Situ Rinpoche represented the Asian, and Shamar Rinpoche the Euro-American segment of the Red Hat followers. However, closer inspection proves this to be an erroneous picture, then Shamar Rinpoche has established a notable power base in the kingdom of Bhutan and Situ Rinpoche also has many supporters for his candidate in the West. There are no small number of groups who would like to mediate between the two rivals. But one knows full well what is at stake for the Kagyupa lineage in this fundamental difference. At the end of an open letter by "neutral" Red Hat abbots is to read, that if the differences continue then it is certain that no side will emerge as the 'winner' or the 'loser'. The sole loser will be the Karmapa Kagyupa lineage as a whole (*Tibetan Review*, October 1993, p. 8).



***The two Karmapas: Urgyen Trinley Dorje (l) and Thinley Thaye Dorje (r)***

But this split among the Kagyupa is useful for the Dalai Lama. Since the dawn of Tibetan history the Karmapa has been the main opponent of the *Kundun* and has already been involved in military conflicts with Lhasa on several occasions. He was his major enemy in the Tibetan civil war described above.

This rivalry did not end with the flight of both hierarchs from Tibet. From the outset (since the end of the sixties) the Kagyupa sect have been incomparably more popular in the West than the orthodox Yellow Hats: the Red Hats were considered to be young, dynamic, uncomplicated, informal, and cosmopolitan. The unconventional appearances of the Kagyu tulku, Chögyam Trungpa, who in the seventies completely identified himself with the artistic avant-garde of Europe and America also set an example for many other masters of the sect. Up until the mid-eighties, Western pupils of Buddhism in any case preferred the red order. Here, in their view, an autonomous counterforce, independent of rigid traditions, was emerging, at least this was how the Kagyupas outwardly presented themselves. They developed into a powerful opponent of the Gelugpa, who likewise attempted to attract proselytes in the West. Among others, this would be one of the reasons why the *Kundun* allied himself with “detested” China in supporting Situ Rinpoche’s candidate, *Ugyen Trinley*, who is resident in the Tsurphu monastery on Chinese territory.

But in the meantime the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has succeeded in binding the Kagyupa (Situ and Gyaltsab lineages) so strongly to himself that it seemed more sensible to place the young Karmapa under his direct control. At first, Ugyen Trinley appeared to function completely as the Chinese intended. In October 1995, the former nomadic boy was the guest of honor during the national holiday celebrations in Beijing and conversed with important Chinese government leaders. The national press corps reported at length on his subsequent journey through China, organized for the young hierarch with much pomp and circumstance. He is supposed to have exclaimed “Long live the People’s Republic of China!”

It is noteworthy that Beijing is attempting less and less to explain the history and basic doctrines of Tibetan Buddhism and is instead deliberately and with more or less success establishing and encouraging a “competing Lamaism” or “alternative Lamaism” directed against the politics of the Dalai Lama. The most powerful incarnation supported by China is undoubtedly the young Eleventh Panchen Lama, about whom we will come to report later. On January 17, 2000, the *South China Morning Post* reported that the Chinese had discovered a reincarnation of Reting Rinpoche who had died in February 1997. The two-year-old boy was given a Buddhist name and ordained in front of a statue in the Jokhang Temple (in Lhasa). The ceremony took place in the presence of Chinese party officials. Reting Rinpoche is considered to be one of the few lamas who in the event of the Dalai Lama’s death could assume the regency until his reincarnation came of age. It is obvious that the “China-friendly Lamaism” is setting a completely new tone in the relationship between the two powers (China and the Tibetans in exile).

China is waiting for the charismatic leader to die, and the Dalai Lama has had to think seriously about the issue of succession, not just of his own reincarnation, but also the individual who as regent will represent his state and religion whilst he is still a minor. The successful and purposeful policy of integration which the Kundun has been pursuing for years within the context of the individual schools makes it possible that upon his death a Kagyupa hierarch could also take on the task of representing all the sects just as the chief of the Gelugpas (the Dalai Lama) de facto

does. At any rate these are speculations being discussed in the Western press. *Time Magazine* says of Ugyen Trinley, "He has the potential to become a leading figure for the next generation, just as the Dalai Lama is for the current one. ... What counts today is one who embodies the Tibetan religious identity and the national claims – and can be a focus for Western sympathy. If the Karmapa continues to show the courage and charisma which he has shown up until now, then he could make an excellent symbol of the resistance to the occupation of Tibet by China" (January 24, 1999; retranslation).

The current incarnation issue bring the undisguised power interests of all involved out into the light of day. [8] And these have a long tradition. For example, the power political competition between the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Sixteenth Karmapa is the reason why the rumor has persisted in western Kagyupa circles that the *Kundun* used magic practices to murder the Karmapa (*Tibetan Review*, August 1987, p. 21).

This "accusation of murder" calls to mind not just the Tibetan civil war but also another mysterious incident. After the death of the Fifteenth Karmapa (in 1922), a powerful Gelugpa minister wanted to push through the recognition of his own son as the next incarnation of the Kagyupa hierarchy against the will of the Red Hats. This autocratic decision was ratified by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the monks of the Tsurphu monastery were forced against their will to accept the Yellow Hats' boy. But it did not take long before the child inexplicably fell to his death from the roof of a building. There was never an explanation of the "accident", at any rate it was of benefit to the genuine candidate of the Red Hats, who was now recognized as the Sixteenth Karmapa.

Incidentally, the official chronicles of the Gelugpas accuse the tenth incarnation of Shamar Rinpoche, of having incited the Nepalese to war against Lhasa in the 18th century. Thereupon his assets were either seized or razed to the ground. A subsequent reincarnation of the great abbot was not accepted by the Yellow Hats. „Merit was becoming less and less!", the Sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa has commented upon this period. „There was much political interference. Black was becoming white. The real was becoming unreal. At that time it was not practicable to have any Sharmapa recognized or enthroned. Everything was kept secret" (Nesterenko, 1992, p. 8). Not until the year 1964, following a lengthy meditation and on the basis of dreams, did the Fourteenth Dalai Lama permit the official reinstatement of the Shamarpa lineage. The *Kundun* should have known that according to his own doctrine history repeats itself and that old conflicts do not just flare up afresh, rather, the laws governing incarnation determine that time and again the same individuals stand opposed to one another (in this case the Shamarpa *versus* the Dalai Lama).

Accordingly the relations between the god-king and the Nepalese are very tense once again. Nepal has over many years established good contacts with its neighbor, China, and currently (1998) has a "communist" government. Tibetan refugees are constantly expelled from the country. In the past there were several armed conflicts between the Royal Nepalese Army and Tibetan underground fighters (ChuShi GangDrug).

Accusations against The Dalai Lama and the Gelugpas of imposing their will upon the “red sect” (the Kagyupa) and attempting to split them are also heard from government circles in the kingdom of Bhutan. The so-called “Switzerland of the Himalayas” and its ruling house (who today are in cooperation with the Shamarpa) traditionally belong to the Kagyupa school, and have therefore had in part very serious disputes with Lhasa for hundreds of years. The Yellow Hat monasteries and their abbots, which have been tolerated in the country as refugee settlements since the sixties, are accused by the Bhutanese of nothing less serious than the politically motivated murder of the Prime Minister, Jigme Dorji, (in 1964) and a long-planned revolt in order to seize control of the country.

In this, the “Yellow Hats” are supposed to have attempted to liquidate the Bhutanese heir to the throne. Alongside one of the king’s mistresses who was under the influence of the Gelugpas, the Dalai Lama’s brother, Gyalo Thondrup, is also supposed to be involved in this assassination attempt, discovered before it could be carried through. In the light of such accusations it is immediately apparent why the Bhutanese have backed Shamar Rinpoche’s decision in the dispute about the new Karmapa, and reject Ugyen Trinley, the candidate of Situ Rinpoche ratified by Dharamsala, as a marionette of the Dalai Lama.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] We are obviously dealing with a Buddhaization of a Vedic myth of origin here, according to which the universe arose from the self-dismemberment of the first human, Prajapati.

[2] The philosophers and theologists of the European Middle Ages developed a “two body theory” of sacred kingship. The scholars drew a distinction between the mortal and mundane body of a king and an eternal royal meta-body. This was fundamentally independent of its human appearance. After the death of the body which had served as his residence he withdrew from this so as to then be reincarnated in the successor of the old king. This model corresponds broadly with the Tibetan Buddhist doctrine of incarnation.

[3] The *mchod-yon* relation to China is also interpreted as the relation pertaining between the sun and the moon by the Lamaist side. Hence we can read in a text from the 17th century that the potentates from Beijing and Lhasa stood opposed to one another as sun and moon, where the Dalai Lama occupied the throne of the sun (Klieger, 1991, p. 45). As the moon the feminine and thus subordinate role is assigned to the Emperor in this classification.

[4] In the *Tibetan Review*, the public relations advertisement for the West, even the shallow dualism „Tibet — good and China — bad” is seen as a problem in one article: „Tibet is the embodiment of the powers of the holy; China is the embodiment of the powers of the demonic; Tibetans are superhuman, Chinese are subhuman. In this Orientalist logic of oppositions, China must be debased in order for Tibet to be exalted; in order for there to be a spiritual and enlightened Orient, there must be a demonic and despotic Orient „ (*Tibetan Review*, May 1994, p. 18).

[5] Following the Dalai Lama the second highest authority in the Gelugpa sect.

[6] Sera is the monastery to which the regent belonged.

[7] As we have already mentioned, such “treasures” (*terma*) are understood to be secret doctrines hidden by dakinis or the “founder of the religion”, Padmasambhava. Many years later they are discovered by chosen individuals and then put into practice.

[8] Tangible material interests also play their role in the “Karmapa affair”. The assets of the Rumtek monastery, the main western monastery of the Karmapa, are being claimed by Dharamsala (i.e., by the *Kundun*) because it is an object of contention between Situ and Shamar Rinpoche who both lay claim to the monastery for their respective candidates.

## 4. SOCIAL REALITY IN ANCIENT TIBET

Just how casual the Tibetans in exile are in dealing with scholarly works on their history and social reality in ancient Tibet is shown by an example from the *Tibetan Review*, the English-language mouthpiece for the exile community. In April 1991, the renowned American historian Melvyn C. Goldstein could publish an article in which he presented for discussion a picture of Tibetan history that contradicted the official line from Dharamsala. In the subsequent debate a Tibetan scholar candidly admitted that Goldstein's investigations were so well documented „that he is probably correct in his analysis” — and then the Tibetan continues, „But his presentation has succeeded in deeply offending most Tibetans” (*Tibetan Review*, January 1992, p. 18).

Thus, among the exile Tibetan community, historical truths lead not to a self-critical stance towards their own history, but rather one was insulted and thus believed oneself justified in repudiating Goldstein's works and denigrating them as Chinese propaganda. (See above all Phintso Thondon's article in the May 1991 issue of *Tibetan Review*). Goldstein's reply to the attacks against him addresses what exactly is to be held of the freedom of opinion among Tibetans in exile: „Mr. Thondon seems to believe that anything which criticizing or contradicting Tibetan nationalist rhetoric coming out of Dharamsala and Tibetan Support Groups must be pro-Chinese. His 'rejoinder', therefore, clearly sets out to discredit - *a priori* - my findings and observations by creating the impression I have a pro-Chinese bias. In using tactics resembling those of the McCarthy era in the US, Mr. Thondon takes sentences out of context, distorts meanings, and worse yet, imputes meanings, that were not there. His response represents the darkest and most unpleasant side of the Tibetan exile movement” (*Tibetan Review*, September 1991, p. 18)

One can safely assume that official statements from Dharamsala will defame as communist propaganda every historical analysis of Tibet which strives for neutrality. To give a further example, we quote their reaction to A. Tom Grunfeld's well-researched book, *The Making of Modern Tibet*. „This book”, a review in the *Tibetan Review* says, „can only be considered a sophisticated presentation of Peking's version of events. Although a lot of material is included in the book which is often overlooked by pro-Tibetan, and the author has evidently made an attempt to be impartial [!], his Sinocentric and Marxist seen to be so extreme that he is quite unable to master them” (*Tibetan Review*, July 1989, p. 13).

### The western image of Tibet

Western observers have in the meantime become more and more blind to the shadowy sides of the Tibetan monastic state. In countless recent books and publications the Tibet of old is depicted as a peaceful state, a sanctuary of calm, the heart of compassion, an ecological oasis, an island of wisdom, a refuge of knowledge, a home of the blissful — in short as a lost earthly paradise, inhabited by enlightened, peace-loving people and mysterious, shining gods. As early as the

1940s, Marco Pallis praised the Tibetans as “one of the earth's most civilized peoples” (quoted by Bishop, 1989, p. 231). “All the residents of Lhasa, rich and poor, high and low, are peaceful”, we can read in a contemporary report. “Even the beggars of Lhasa have only to ply their trade for some time in the morning to get enough food for the day. In the evening they are all nicely drunk. The people of Lhasa were physically relaxed, mentally contented and happy. The food of the city is also nutritious. No one has to strive to make a living. Life takes care of itself, as a matter of course. Everything is splendid” (quoted by Craig, 1997, pp.86-87).

The *Kundun* also knows to only report only the most positive aspects of the past of the Land of Snows: “The continuing influence of Buddhism produced a society of peace and harmony. We enjoyed freedom and contentment” (*Panorama* no. 553, November 20, 1997, p. 2). Or at another point: “A poor Tibetan had little cause to envy or be hostile towards the rich lord of his estate, then he knew that everybody harvested what he had sown in his earlier lives. We were quite simply happy” (*Panorama* no. 553, November 20, 1997, p. 2). This image of a poor, deeply religious, pure, and blissfully happy Tibet has meanwhile become fixed in the consciousness of millions.

It has become a favored topic in, amongst other things, the esoteric literature, but above all in the American film industry. The actor Brad Pitt, who played the role of the German teacher of the Dalai Lama, Heinrich Harrer, in a melodramatic story (*Seven years in Tibet*), came to the following conclusion once the film had been shot: “Look at the Tibetans, how poor they are in material terms. And then look at them, how happy and peaceful they are, and their attitude to life with which they go their way. This is simply fantastic. It gets under your skin. It is the hearts of the people which make Tibet into Shangri-La, into paradise. In America this has become a real movement” (*Panorama* no. 553, November 20, 1997, p. 1).

Such glorifications have spread like wildfire in recent years. “The result is a one-sidedly bright image of spiritual purity”, writes Tibet researcher Peter Bishop. “Many contemporary western studies go to the great length to avoid confronting the shadow side of Tibetan spirituality. One can often encounter a sociological naiveté that stands in stark contrast to claims of scientific scrutiny” (Bishop, 1993, p. 73).

In contrast, among the majority of the earlier travelers, the Tibet of old made a deeply negative impression, at least with respect to its social situation, which are these days all too readily dismissed as imperialist arrogance and European racism, although identical criticisms of social conditions were also articulated by admirers of Tibetan culture. Alexandra David-Neel, for example, was just as repelled by the general misery of the country as by the corruption of the priestly caste. Even such a fanatic devotee of the *Kalachakra Tantra* as Nicholas Roerich complained about the general decadence in the Tibet of the time.

Likewise, Heinrich Harrer does not paint a rosy picture of Lhasa in the forties, but rather depicts the land as an unjust albeit fascinating anachronism. In his world famous travelogue, *Seven Years in Tibet*, the German mentor of the young Dalai Lama writes: "The power of the monks in Tibet is unique and can only be compared to a strict dictatorship. They keep a mistrustful eye on every influence from outside which could threaten their power. They themselves are clever enough to not believe in the limitlessness of their strength, but would punish anyone who expressed doubts about this" (Harrer, 1984, p. 71).

Dozens of such assessments like that of the "Dalai Lama's best friend" can be found in the early literature on Tibet. Many visitors prior to the year 1959 report that dictatorial decisions, the arbitrary use of power, brainwashing and paranoid belief in demons, spiritual control and crawling servility, bitterest poverty and oriental wealth, slavery, serfdom, hunger, diseases, a lack of any hygiene, alcoholism, cruel punishments, torture, political and private murder, fear and violence, theft, robbery, and mutual mistrust were everyday features of the kingdom of the Dalai Lamas. The *Chakravartin* from Lhasa ruled over a vale of tears.

Of course, these negative conditions in no way exclude the possibility that the Land of Snows also had oases of peace, equanimity, erudition, joy, helpfulness, noble-mindedness, or whatever all the Buddhist virtues may be. But what is peculiar about the current image of Tibet is that it only stresses its bright sides and simply denies and represses its shady side.

### **The social structure of former Tibet**

For centuries, the education system, the administration of finances, jurisdiction, and the police lay in the hands of monastic officials. Bureaucracy and sacredness have long been compatible in Asia. Hence we are familiar from the Chinese example with a boring Confucian heaven of civil servants, inhabited by heavenly emperors and their ministers, mandarins, scribes and administrators. Such images are also known in Tibet. We may recall how bureaucratic the administrative structure of the wonderland of *Shambhala* was even imagined to be.

The clerical administration functioned well for as long as it concerned the immediate affairs of a monastery. But it could hardly cope with all the state and social political divisions of the highlands. Western researchers who visited Tibet in the 19th and 20th centuries thus encountered a completely inflexible administration: decision-making processes stretched out over weeks, ignorance and timidity dominated the incapable civil service and nowhere could be anything be attained without bribery. [1]

The social structure of the Tibet of old in no way corresponded to an ideal-typical model of happy individuals it is so often depicted as being. Alongside the omnipresent clergy, the country was

ruled by circa 150 to 300 “secular” families. Different groups were distinguished among the aristocracy. The highest stratum traced their ancestry to the old Tibetan kings, then followed the members of the Dalai Lamas’ families. These were ennobled simultaneously with the enthronement of the new god-king. Every family in the country was proud to have a monk as a son. For aristocrats, however, it sufficed that the novice spend just one night in the monastery in order to — for an appropriate fee — be considered ordained. Equipped with the considerable privileges of a lama he could then return home.

The absolute majority of the sedentary population were the “serfs” of a wealthy ruling elite, and saddled with high taxes. The lives of these Tibetans was hard and frugal, they were badly nourished and the medical services now praised in the West were largely unsuccessful. Forms of slavery were known up until the twentieth century — something which is denied these days by the Tibetans in exile. As in India there was a caste of untouchables. Among these were to be counted beggars, prostitutes, blacksmiths (!), fishermen, musicians and actors. In many parts of the country members of these stigmatized groups were not even permitted to become monks.

In contrast, the nomads preserved a relative autonomy, in relation to both the clergy and Chinese or Mongolian invaders. This was even true of their customs and traditions. For example, the killing of animals — strictly forbidden in Buddhism — was normal practice among them. The monks in Lhasa — none of them vegetarians — had the animals slaughtered by Muslim butchers who thus brought the bad karma from the killings down upon themselves, then the consumption of meat is not a “sin” for the Tibetans, but the slaughter of animals decidedly is. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, himself a meat-eater for “reasons of health”, nevertheless campaigns constantly (in the West) for a vegetarian lifestyle.

On the basis of the doctrine of karma, the privileged strata of the Tibet of old saw their advantages as a reward for previous good deeds in past lives. Anyone born into the lower castes had a badly led past life to blame for this and was marked from the outset as a former villain. Such degrading judgments are still prevalent among the Tibetans in exile. Rebecca Redwood French reports on a case, for example, where a child who made strange noises and threw a picture of the Dalai Lamas to the ground was recognized as the reincarnation of a dog (Redwood French, 1995). One can imagine how easily such classifications could lead to a general social arrogance and the abuse of power.

### **Tibetan criminal law**

On the basis of a western orientation towards democracy and human rights, we would have to describe the Tibet of old as a totalitarian state. The legal system was for three hundred years unchangingly based upon the *Ganden Podrang Codex* which was commissioned by the “Great Fifth”. Yet criminal law was already codified in the thirteenth century by the Sakyapa sect. It displayed a strong Mongolian influence, was derived from the *Yasa* (statute-book) of Genghis Khan, and, like the penal system of the European Middle Ages, was extremely cruel. Bizarre

mutilations like blindings, the cutting off of limbs or tearing out of tongues, deliberately allowing people to freeze to death, the pillory, shackling, yoking, lifelong imprisonment in damp pits all count as common punishments up until the 20th century, even after the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had introduced a number of moderation's. In 1940, a British envoy still saw „all over Tibet [...] men who had been deprived of an arm or a leg for theft” (Grunfeld, 1996, p.24).



Since Buddhism fundamentally forbade the killing of a living creature, criminals were often tortured to the point of death and then left to fend for themselves. If they now died of the consequences this was purely a matter of their own karma. These days the power elite in Dharamsala maintains an embarrassed silence about such inhuman acts and brushes them aside as Chinese propaganda; western observers of the Tibet of old and their reports are considered to be prejudiced and examples of European arrogance. It is truly astonishing how this

obscuration of their own dreadful past by the lamas in the West has succeeded. And there is a lot of authentic photographic evidence; a public whipping, which took place in the middle of Lhasa in 1950 was reproduced in the American magazine, *Life*, for example (*Life*, November 13, 1950, pp. 130–136).

The punishment of criminal delinquents was by no means confined to this world, rather the monks condemned people to millions (!) of years in the most dreadful hells, more grotesque and sadistic even than their counterparts in the Christian Middle Ages. Voltaire's cry of "Remember your cruelties", by which he primarily meant the politics of the Christian clergy and with which he launched his struggle for human rights, ought to be heard in Dharamsala as well!

Equality before the law varied in Tibet according to social status and wealth. For a murder, one had to pay a so-called "life tax" (*mistong*) to the surviving dependents and could thus avoid criminal prosecution. According to a statement from one of the current Dalai Lama's brothers, this practice was still being followed in the mid-twentieth century. The price was naturally related to the status of the victim. Hence, in the fifties the life of a high monastic official was worth between US \$8,000 and \$10,000. (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 24). For the murder of a woman from the lower castes, 10 Liang (about 11 ounces) of silver was to be paid.

### Clerical commerce

The Buddhist clergy was also commercially active and the most important monasteries were regarded as significant trading centers. The lamas even dealt in credit. Production was mostly devotional objects which the monks usually manufactured themselves: holy images, statuettes of gods, amulets, and similar things. As services, soothsaying, astrology, and the performance of all manner of rituals were offered for sale. A further source of income was mendicancy. Bands of monks were dispatched through the country to collect donations. They often returned with great cargoes. The rent for a domestic cell within a monastery had to be paid by the monk's relatives. If this was not possible, then the novice had to earn his keep. Franz Michael thus referred to the Tibetan monastery as a „private, profit-making, 'capitalist' enterprise. It was capitalist in the sense that the manager's [the administrator of the monastery] aim was clearly and admittedly to make the greatest possible profit for its owner, the incarnation [of the abbot]" (Michael, 1982, p. 49).

The Lamaist dispensaries bloomed splendidly. The excreta (stools and urine) of higher tulkus were manufactured into pills and sold as valuable medicines. The supreme palliative was of course the excrement of the "living Buddha" (*Kundun*). When the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was staying in China, his chamberlain collected his excrement daily in a golden pot so as to then send it to Lhasa to be manufactured into a medication (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 22).

Traditional Tibetan medicine, now on offer worldwide, and which the western admirers claim can cure cancer, had to be content with less success in its home country. The majority of the population suffered from sexual diseases. Smallpox was widespread and even the Thirteenth Dalai Lama fell victim to it.

### Political intrigue

There is no question that the lamas constantly employed their charismatic religious aura to amass worldly power and to generate personal grandeur. "The original Buddha teaching", Matthias Hermanns writes, "of the 'flight from worldly life' was transformed into the Machiavellian principle of unrestrained, moral-free power politics" (Hermanns, 1956, p. 372). Only the monks would never have called it this. It was a part of their ruling ideology to present every expression, no matter how secular and decadent, as the decision of a deity.

An important instrument of Tibetan power politics was the political intrigue. This is admittedly a universal phenomenon, but in Tibet it developed such a high status because the worldly resources available to the lamas were barely adequate to the task of controlling central Asia. Above all there was only a rudimentary army. Hence, time and again it was necessary to seek armed allies, or to play armed opponents off against one another. The great abbots, regents and Dalai Lamas have made extensive use of these strategies over the course of history. They were masters of the game of political intrigue and were for this reason as much feared by the Chinese emperors as the Mongolian Khans.

Poison and assassinations dominated even the internal Lamaist scene. Not all “living Buddhas” reached the age at which they could govern. As we have already described above, the four divine children (the Ninth to Twelfth Dalai Lamas) fell victim to powerful cliques within the clerical establishment. The great abbots were especially feared because of their magical abilities which they employed against their enemies. Alongside the authority of state, magic was the other significant control mechanism of which constant use was made. It played a more important role at an elevated political level than the bureaucratic administration and international diplomacy.

### More recent developments in the historical image

The marked differences of opinion in the assessment of the Land of Snows and its culture are not just a product of the western imagination, but must likewise be explained in terms of a gaping disparity between Lamaism’s own ideal-typical claims and an “underdeveloped” social reality. A devout Tibetan Buddhist tends to have his eyes fixed upon the ideals of his doctrine (Dharma) and to be blind to the social realities of his country. This is almost always true when the Tibet of old is concerned. As Tantric, the “law of inversion” also grants him the possibility of seeing all that is bad and imperfect in his surroundings as the formative material for the work of spiritual transformation, then according to logic of inversion *Vajrayana* makes the base social reality into an element of the becoming whole, into the *prima materia* of the tantric experiment.

It goes without saying that the lamas thankfully adopted the western ideal-world vision of a peaceful and spiritual Tibet. They combined this with images of paradise from their own, Buddhist mythology and added historical events from the times of the Tibetan kings to the mix. The result was the picture of a society in which all people had lived happily since time immemorial, with a smile on their face night and day. All the needs of a meaningful human existence could be filled in the Tibet of old; nothing was lacking. Everyone respected all others. Humans, animals, and nature lived together peacefully with respect. The ecological balance was assured. The Tibetan kings ruled like goodly fathers and the ecclesiastical princes followed in their stead. Then came the Chinese military with guns and artillery, enslaved the people, tortured the priests, destroyed the culture and planned to totally exterminate the Tibetan race.

With such or similar images, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has up until most recently largely succeeded in implanting the image of a pure, noble, humane, ecological, spiritually highly developed Tibet, this stronghold against materialism and inhumanity, in the awareness of the world’s public. Even the German news magazine, *Der Spiegel*, normally extremely critical of such matters, becomes rapturous: “Tibet as a symbol of the good, as the last stronghold of spirituality, where wisdom and harmony are preserved, while the world lies in darkness and chaos: Has the 'Roof of the World' become a projection of all our longings? What is the secret behind the western fascination with this distant land, its religion and its god-king?” (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 110).

But under the pressure of the vehement critique of the history of the country which has been building since 1996, and which can table indisputable evidence, in Dharamsala one is also

becoming more careful of unrestrainedly glorifying the Tibet of old. For this reason the Dalai Lama ever more often now employs the handy formula that Tibet, like all nations, has its good sides and its bad sides; the future will, however, only stress the good. That is more or less all. Hence, the shadows which cast their pall over the history of the Land of Snows are only referred to in very general terms — roughly in the sense that where there is much light there is also much darkness.

It is not our task here to offer an assessment of the improvements much praised by the Chinese which they claim to have brought to the medieval country. We personally believe that in social terms the Tibetan people today live better than they did under the rule of Lamaism. But we in no sense mean by this that the current social situation in the Land of Snows is ideal. We hold many of the accusations and criticisms leveled at Beijing's "minority politics" by the Tibetans in exile to be thoroughly relevant. It can also not be denied that resistance to China is today growing among the Tibetans and that it primarily makes use of religious arguments. Like everywhere in the world, there has also been a religious renaissance on "roof of the world" since the mid-eighties. We see a problem in this Lamaist revival, not in the Tibetan democracy movement. What is peculiar and confusing about the political situation is, however, that the clerical revival itself very successfully pretends to be the democracy movement, and manipulates the awareness of both the Tibetans and the West with this deception.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] On a spiritual plane this bureaucracy corresponded to a meticulously detailed regulation of the monasteries and a dry scholasticism which often resulted in hair-splitting and a unending process of commentary upon the original texts. Thus commentaries upon the commentaries upon the commentaries on a particular Tantra arose. The Tibetan pleasure in the eternal repetition of the same formulas, the untiring circling of the same topics had led to the invention of the prayer mill — a unique construction which most vividly demonstrates how mechanistic and stereotyped this religion was. This was a metal cylinder, which was rotated for hours by hand by believers, usually with the mantra *om mani padme hum* on their lips.

## 4. BUDDHOCRACY AND ANARCHY: CONTRADICTORY OR COMPLEMENTARY?

The totalitarian Lamaist state (the Tibetan Buddhocracy), headed by its absolute ruler, the Dalai Lama, was — as contradictory as this may at first appearance seem to be — only one of the power-political forces which decisively shaped the history of Tibet. On the other side we find all the disintegrative and anti-state forces which constantly challenged the clerical sphere as dangerous opponents. As we shall soon see, within the whole social structure they represented the forces of *anarchy*: „Thus, Tibetans understand power both“, writes Rebecca Redwood French, „as a highly centralized, rigidly controlled and hierarchically determined force and as a diffuse and multivalent force“ (Redwood French, 1995, p. 108). What are these „diffuse and multivalent“ forces and how does the „highly centralized ... and hierarchically determined“ Buddhist state deal with them?

The powers which rebelled against the established monastic order in the Tibet of old were legion — above all the all-powerful *nature* of the country. Extreme climatic conditions and the huge territory, barely developed in terms of transport logistics, rendered effective state control by the lamas only partially realizable. But the problems were not just of the factual kind. In addition, from the Tibetan, animist point of view, the wilds of nature are inhabited by countless gods, demons, and spirits, who must all be brought under control: the *lu* — water spirits which contaminate wells and divert rivers; the *nyen* — tree spirits that cause illnesses, especially cancer; the *jepo* — the harmful ghosts of bad kings and lamas who broke their vows; the black *dü* — open rebels who deliberately turn against the Dharma; the *mamo*, also black — a dangerous breed of witches and harpies; the *sa* — evil astral demons; and many others. They all posed a daily threat for body and soul, life and possession in the Tibet of old and had to be kept in check through constant rituals and incantations. This animist world view is still alive and well today despite Chinese communist materialism and rationalism and is currently experiencing an outright renaissance.

But it was not enough to have conquered and enchained (mostly via magic rituals) the nature spirits listed. They then required constant guarding and supervision so that they did resume their mischief. Even the deities known as *dharmapalas*, who were supposed to protect the Buddhist teachings, tended to forget their duties from time to time and turn against their masters (the lamas). This “omnipresence of the demonic” kept the monks and the populace in a constant state of alarm and caused an extreme tension within the Tibetan culture.

On the *social* level it was, among other things, the high degree of criminality which time and again provoked Tibetan state Buddhism and was seen as subversive. The majority of westerners traveling in Tibet (in the time before the Chinese occupation) reported that the brigandry in the country represented a general nuisance. Certain nomadic tribes, the Khampas for example, regarded robbery as a lucrative auxiliary income or even devoted themselves to it full-time. They

were admittedly feared but definitely not despised for this, but were rather seen as the heroes of a robber romanticism widespread in the country. To go out without servants and unarmed was also considered dangerous in the Lhasa of old. One lived in constant fear of being held up.

In terms of *popular culture*, there were strong currents of an original, anarchist (non-Buddhist) shamanism which coursed through the whole country and were not so easily brought under the umbrella of a Buddhist concept of state. The same was true of the Nyingmapa sect, whose members had a very libertarian and vagabond lifestyle. In addition, there were the wandering yogis and ascetics as further representatives of “anarchy”. And last not least, the great orders conducted an unrelenting competitive campaign against one another which was capable of bringing the entire state to the edge of chaos. If, for example, the Sakyapas were at the high point of their power, then the Kagyupas would lay in wait so as to discover their weaknesses and bring them down. If the Kagyupas seized control over the Land of Snows, then they would be hampered by the Gelugpas with help from the Mongolians.

The Lamaist state and anarchy have always stood opposed to one another in Tibetan history. But can we therefore say that Buddhism always and without fail took on the role of the state which found itself in constant conflict with all the *non-Buddhist* forces of anarchy? We shall see that the social dynamic was more complex than this. Tantric Buddhism is itself — as a result of the lifestyle which the tantras require — an expression of “anarchy”, but only partially and only at times. In the final instance it succeeds in combining both the authoritarian state and an anarchic lifestyle, or, to put it better, in Tibet (and now in the West) the lamas have developed an ingenious concept and practice through which to use anarchy to shore up the Buddhocracy. Let us examine this more closely through a description of the lives of various tantric “anarchists”.

### **The grand sorcerers (Maha Siddhas)**

The anarchist element in the Buddhist landscape is definitely not unique to Tibet. The founding father, Shakyamuni himself, displayed an extremely anti-state and antisocial behavior and later required the same from his followers.

Instead of taking up his inheritance as a royal ruler, he chose homelessness; instead of opting for his wife and harem, he chose abstinence; instead of wealth he sought poverty. But the actual “anarchist” representatives of Buddhism are the 84 grand sorcerers or *Maha Siddhas*, who make up the legendary founding group of *Vajrayana* and from whom the various lineages of Tibetan Buddhism are traced. Hence, in order to consider the origins of the anti-state currents in Tibetan history, we must cast a glance over the border into ancient India.

All of the stories about the *Maha Siddhas* tell of the spectacular adventures they had to go through to attain their goal of enlightenment (i.e., the ritual absorption of *gynergy*). Had they succeeded in this, then they could refer to themselves as “masters of the *maha mudra*”. The number of 84 does not correspond to any historical reality. Rather, we are dealing with a mystical number here which symbolizes perfection in several Indian religious systems. Four of the *Maha Siddhas* were women. They all lived in India between the eighth and twelfth centuries.

The majority of these grand sorcerers came from the lower social strata. They were originally fishermen, weavers, woodcutters, gardeners, bird-catchers, beggars, servants, or similar. The few who were members of the higher castes — the kings, brahmans, abbots, and university lecturers — all abandoned their privileges so as to lead the life of the mendicant wandering yogis as “drop-outs”. But their biographies have nothing in common with the pious Christian legends — they are violent, erotic, demonic, and grotesque. The American, Keith Dowman, stresses the rebellious character of these unholy holy men: „Some of these Siddhas are iconoclasts, dissenters, anti-establishment rebels. [...] Obsessive caste rules and regulations in society and religious ritual as an end in itself, were undermined by the siddhas' exemplary free living” (Dowman, 1985, pp. 2). Dowman explicitly refers to their lifestyle as „spiritual anarchism” which did not allow of any control by institutionalism (Dowman, 1985, p. 3).



***Ling-tsang Gyalpo – a great Nyinma Phurba Master***

The relationship with a woman so as to perform the sexual magic rites with her was at the core of every Siddha's life. Whether king or beggar, they all preferred girls from the lower castes — washer-women, prostitutes, barmaids, dancing girls, or cemetery witches.

The grand sorcerers' clothes and external appearance was also in total contradiction to the image of the Buddhist monks. They were demonically picturesque. With naked torsos, the *Maha Siddhas* wore a fur loincloth, preferably that of a beast of prey. Huge rings hung from their ears and about their necks swung necklaces of human bone. In contrast to the ordained *bhiksus* (monks) the grand sorcerers never shaved their heads, instead letting their hair grow into a thick mane which they bound together above their heads in a knot. Their style more resembled that of the Shivaite

yogis and it was difficult to recognize them as traditional followers of Gautama Buddha. Many of the *Maha Siddhas* were thus equally revered by both the Shivaite and the Buddhist. From this the Indologist, Ramachandra Rao, concludes that in the early phase of Tantrism the membership of a particular religious current was in no way the deciding criterion for a yogi's world view, rather, it was the tantric technique which made them all (independent of their religious affiliation) members of a single esoteric community (Ramachandra Rao, 1989, p. 42).

The *Maha Siddhas* wanted to provoke. Their "demonic nihilism" knew no bounds. They shocked people with their bizarre appearance, were even disrespectful to kings and as a matter of principle did the opposite of what one would expect of either an "ordinary" person or an ordained *Mahayana* monk. It was a part of their code of honor to publicly represent their mystic guild through completely unconventional behavior. Instead of abstinence they enjoyed brandy, rather than peacemakers they were ruffians. The majority of them took mind-altering drugs. They were dirty and unkempt. They collected alms in a skull bowl. Some of them proudly fed themselves with human body parts which lay scattered about the crematoria. We have reported upon their erotic practices in detail in the first part of our study, and likewise upon their boundless power fantasies which did not shy at any crime. Hence, the magic powers (*siddhis*) were at the top of their wish list, even if it is repeatedly stressed in the legends that the "worldly" *siddhis* were of only secondary importance. Telepathy, clairvoyance, the ability to fly, to walk on water, to raise the dead, to kill the living by power of thought — they constantly performed wonders in their immediate environs so as to demonstrate their superiority.

But how well can this "spiritual anarchism" of the *Maha Siddhas* be reconciled with the Buddhist conception of state? In his basic character the Siddha is an opponent all state hierarchies and every form of discipline. All the formalities of life are repugnant to him — marriage, occupation, position, official accolades and recognition. But this is only temporarily valid, then once the yogi has attained a state of enlightenment a wonderful and ordered world arises from this in accordance with the law of inversion. Thanks to the sexual magic rites of Tantrism the brothel bars have now become divine palaces, nauseating filth has become diamond-clear purity, stinking excrement shining pieces of gold, horny hetaeras noble queens, insatiable hate undying love, chaos order, anarchy the absolute state. The monastic state is, as we shall show in relation to the "history of the church" in Tibet, the goal; the "wild life" of the *Maha Siddhas* in contrast is just a transitional phase.

For this reason we should not refer to the tantric yogi not simply as a "spiritual anarchist" as does Keith Dowman, nor as a "villain". Rather, he is a disciplined hero of the "good", who dives into the underworld of erotic love and crime so as to stage a total inversion there, in that he transforms everything negative into its positive. He is no libertarian free thinker, but rather an "agent" of the monastic community who has infiltrated the red-light and criminal milieu for tactic spiritual reasons. But he does not always see his task as being to transform the whores, murderers and manslaughterers into saints, rather he likewise understands it as being to make use of their aggression to protect and further his own ideas and interests.

## The anarchist founding father of Tibetan Buddhism: Padmasambhava

The most famous of all the great magicians of Tibet is, even though he is not one of the 84 *Maha Siddhas*, the Indian, Padmasambhava, the “Lotus Born”. The Tibetans call him *Guru Rinpoche*, “valuable teacher”. He is considered to be not just an emanation of *Avalokiteshvara* (like the Dalai Lama) but is himself also, according to the doctrine of the “Great Fifth”, a previous incarnation of the Tibetan god-king. The reader should thus always keep in mind that the current Fourteenth Dalai Lama is accountable for the wild biography of *Guru Rinpoche* as his own former life.

Legend tells of his wondrous birth from a lotus flower — hence his name (*padma* means ‘lotus’). He appeared in the form of an eight-year-old boy “without father or mother”, that is, he gave rise to himself. The Indian king Indrabhuti discovered him in the middle of a lake, and brought the lotus boy to his palace and reared him as a son. In the iconography, Padmasambhava may be encountered in eight different forms of appearance, behind each of this a legend can be found. His trademark, which distinguishes him from all other Tibetan “saints”, is an elegant “French” goatee. He holds the *kathanga*, a rod bearing three tiny impaled human heads, as his favorite scepter. His birthplace in India, Uddiyana, was famed and notorious for the wildness of the tantric practices which were cultivated there.

Around 780 C.E. the Tibetan king, Trisong Detsen, fetched Padmasambhava into Tibet. The political intentions behind this royal summons were clear: the ruler wanted to weaken the power of the mighty nobles and the caste of the Bon priests via the introduction of a new religion. Padmasambhava was supposed to replace at court the Indian scholar, Shantarakshita, (likewise a Buddhist), who had proved too weak to assert himself against the recalcitrant aristocracy.

Guru Rinpoche, in contrast, was already considered to be a tantric superman in Uddiyana. He demanded his own weight in gold bars of the king as his fee for coming. When he finally stood before Trisong Detsen, the king demanded that he demonstrate his respect with a bow. Instead of doing so, Guru Rinpoche sprayed lightning from his fingertips, so that it was the king who sank to his knees and recognized the magician as the appropriate ally with whom to combat the Bon priests, likewise skilled in magic things. The guru was thus bitterly hated by these and by the nobles, even the king’s ministers treated him with the greatest hostility imaginable.



***Statue of Padmasambhava***

The saga has made Padmasambhava the founding father of Tibetan Buddhism. His life story is a fantastic collection of miracles which made him so popular among the people that he soon enjoyed a greater reverence than the historical Buddha, whose life appeared sober and pale in comparison. Reports about Guru Rinpoche and his writings are drawn primarily from the *termas* (treasures) already mentioned above, which, it is claimed, he himself hid so that they would come to light centuries later.

From a very young age the boy already stood out because of his abnormal and violent nature. He killed a sleeping baby by throwing a stone at it and justified this deed with the pretense that the child would have become a malignant magician who would have harmed many people in his later life. Apart from his royal adoptive father, Indrabhuti, no-one accepted this argument, and several people attempted to bring him to justice. At the urgings of a minister he was first confined to a palace by soldiers. Shortly afterward the guru appeared upon the roof of the building, naked except for a “sixfold bone ornament”, and with a *vajra* and a trident in his hands. The people gathered rapidly to delight in the odd spectacle, among them one of the hostile ministers with his wife and son. Suddenly and without warning Padmasambhava’s *vajra* penetrated the brain of the boy and the trident speared through the heart of the mother fatally wounding both of them.

The pot boiled over at this additional double murder and the entire court now demanded that the wrongdoer be impaled. Yet once again he succeeded in proving that the murder victims had earned their violent demise as the just punishment for their misdeeds in earlier lives. It was decided to refrain from the death penalty and to damn Padmasambhava instead. Thereupon a

troupe of dancing dakinis appeared in the skies leading a miraculous horse by the halter. Guru Rinpoche mounted it and vanished into thin air. Acts of violence were to continue to characterize his future life.

As much as he was a master of tantric erotic love, he decisively rejected the institution of marriage. When Indrabhuti wanted to find him a wife, he answered by saying that women were like wild animals without minds and that they vainly believed themselves to be goddesses. There were, however, exceptions, as well hidden as a needle in a haystack, and if he would have to marry then he should be brought such an exception. After many unsuccessful presentations, Bhasadhara was finally found. With her he began his tantric practices, so that "the mountains shook and the gales blew".

The marriage did not last long. Like the historical Buddha, Guru Rinpoche turned his back on the entertaining palace life of his adoptive father and chose as his favorite place to stay the crematoria of India. He was in the habit of meditating there, and there he held his constant rendezvous with terrible-looking witches (dakinis). One document reports how he dressed in the clothes of dead and fed upon their decomposing flesh (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 195). He is supposed to have visited a total of eight cemeteries in order to there and then fight out a magical initiation battle with the relevant officiating dakinis.

His most spectacular encounter was definitely the meeting with *Guhya Jnana*, the chief of the terror goddesses, one of the appearances of *Vajrayogini*. She lived in a castle made of human skulls. When Padmasambhava reached the gates he was unable to enter the building, despite his magic powers. He instructed a servant to inform her mistress of his visit. When she returned without having achieved anything he tried once more with all manner of magic to gain entry. The girl laughed at him, took a crystal knife and slit open her torso with it. The endless retinue of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas appeared within her insides. "I am just a servant", she said. Only now was Padmasambhava admitted.

*Guhya Inana* sat upon her throne. In her hands she held a double-ended drum and a skull bowl and was surrounded by 32 servant girls. The yogi bowed down with great respect and said, "Just as all Buddhas through the ages had their gurus, so I ask you to be my teacher and to take me on as your pupil" (Govinda, 1984, p. 226). Thereupon she assembled the whole pantheon of gods within her breast, transformed the petitioner into a seed syllable and swallowed him. Whilst the syllable lay upon her lips she gave him the sacrament of *Amitabha*, whilst he rested in her stomach he was initiated into the secrets of *Avalokiteshvara*. After leaving her lotus (i.e., vagina) he received the sacraments of the body, the speech, and the spirit. Only now had he attained his immortal *vajra* body.

This scene also grants the feminine force an outstanding status within the initiation process. But there are several versions of the story. In another account it is Padmasambhava who dissolves *Vajrayogini* within his heart. Jeffrey Hopkins even describes a tantra technique in which the pupil imagines himself to be the goddess so as to then be absorbed by his teacher who visualizes himself as *Guru Rinpoche* (Hopkins, 1982, p. 180).

Without doubt, Padmasambhava's relationship with Yeshe Tshogyal, the *karma mudra* given to him by Indrabhuti, and with Princess Mandavara, the reincarnation of a dakini, display a rare tolerance. Thus within the tradition both yoginis were able to preserve a certain individuality and personality over the course of centuries — a rare exception in the history of *Vajrayana*. For this reason it could be believed that Padmasambhava had shown a revolutionary attitude towards the woman, especially since the statement often quoted here in the West is from him: "The basis for realizing enlightenment is a human body. Male or female — there is no great difference. But if she develops the mind bent on enlightenment, a woman's body is better" (Gross, 1993, p. 79).

But how can this comment, which is taken from a *terma* from the 18<sup>th</sup> century (!), be reconciled with the following statement by the guru, which he is supposed to have offered in answer to Yeshe Tshogyal's question about the suitability of women for the tantric rituals? „Your faith is mere platitude, your devotion insincere, but your greed and jealousy are strong. Your trust and generosity are weak, yet your disrespect and doubt are huge. Your compassion and intelligence are weak, but your bragging and self-esteem are great. Your devotion and perseverance are weak, but you are skilled at misguiding and distorting Your pure perception and courage is small" (Binder-Schmidt, 1994 p. 56).

Yet this comment is quite harmless! The "demonic" *Guru Rinpoche* also exists — the aggressive butcher of people and serial rapist. There is for instance a story about him in circulation in which he killed a Tibetan king and impregnated his 900 wives so as to produce children who were devoted to the Buddhist teaching. In another episode from his early life he was attacked out of the blue by dakinis and male dakas. The story reports that "he [then] kills the men and possesses the women" (R. Paul, 1982, p. 163). Robert A. Paul thus sees in Padmasambhava an intransigent, active, phallic, and sexist archetype whom he contrasts with *Avalokiteshvara*, the mild, asexual, feminized, and transcendent counterpole. Both typologies, Paul claims, determine the dynamic of Tibetan history and are united within the person of the Dalai Lama (R. Paul, 1982, p. 87).

Many of the anecdotes about *Guru Rinpoche* which are in circulation also depict him as a boastful superman. He paid for his beer in a tavern by holding the sun still for two days for the female barkeeper. This earned him not just the reputation of a sun-controller but also the saga that he had invented beer in an earlier incarnation. His connection to the solar cults is also vouched for by other anecdotes. For instance, one day he assumed the shape of the sun bird, the *garuda*, and conquered the *lu*, the feminine (!) water spirits. Lightning magic remained one of his preferred techniques, and he made no rare use of it. An additional specialty was to appear in a sea of flames, which was not difficult for him as an emanation of the "fire god", *Avalokiteshvara*. His

*siddhis* (magic powers) were thought to be unlimited; he flew through the air, spoke all languages, knew every magic battle technique, and could assume any shape he chose. Nonetheless, all these magical techniques were not sufficient for him to remain the spiritual advisor of Trisong Detsen for long. The Bon priests and the king's wife (Tse Pongza) were too strong and Guru Rinpoche had to leave the court. Yet this was not the end of his career. He moved north in order to do battle with the unbridled demons of the Land of Snows. The rebellious spirits, usually local earth deities, constantly blocked his path. Yet without exception all the "enemies of the teaching" were defeated by his magic powers. The undertaking soon took on the form of a triumphal procession.

It was Guru Rinpoche's unique style to never destroy the opponents he defeated but rather to demand of them a threefold gesture of submission: 1. the demons had to symbolically offer up to him their life force or "heart blood"; 2. they had to swear an oath of loyalty; and 3. they had to commit themselves to fighting for instead of against the Buddhist teachings in future. If these conditions were met then they did not need to abandon their aggressive, bloodthirsty, and extremely destructive ways. In contrast, they were not freed from their murderous fighting spirit and their terrifying ugliness but instead from then on served Tantric Buddhism as its terrible protective deities, who were all the more holy the more cruelly they behaved. The Tibetan Buddhist pantheon was thus gradually filled out with all imaginable misshapen figures, whose insanity, atrocities, and misanthropy were boundless. Among them could be found vampires, cannibals, executioners, ghouls (horrifying ghosts), and sadists. Guru Rinpoche and his later incarnations, the Dalai Lamas, were and still are considered to be the undisputed masters of this cabinet of horrors, who they regally command from their lotus throne.

His victory over the daemonic powers was sealed by the construction of a three-dimensional mandala, the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet. *Samye* symbolized nothing less than a microcosmic model of the tantric world system, with Mount Meru at its center. The inaugurating ceremony conducted by Padmasambhava was preceded by the banishment of all venomous devils. Then the earth goddess, *Srinmo*, was nailed down, in that Guru Rinpoche drove his *phurba* (ritual dagger) into the ground with a ceremonial gesture. Among those present at this ritual were 50 beautifully adorned girls and boys with vases filled with valuable substances. During the subsequent construction works the rebellious spirits repeatedly tried to prevent the completion of the temple and at night tore down what had been achieved during the day. But here too, the guru understood how to tame the nightly demons and then make construction workers of them.

In the holiest of holies of Samye there could be found a statue of *Avalokiteshvara* which was said to have arisen of itself. Apart from this, the monastery had something of an eerie and gloomy air about it. The saga tells of how once a year Tibet's terror gods assembled on the roofs of the monastery for a cannibalistic feast and a game of dice in which the stakes were human souls. On these days all the oracle priests of the Land of Snows were said to have fallen into a trance as if under the instruction of a higher power. Because of the microcosmic significance of Samye, its protective god is the *Red Tsiu*, a mighty force in the pandemonium of the highlands. "He possesses red locks, his body is surrounded by a glory of fire. Shooting stars fly from his eyes and a great hail of blood falls from his mouth. He gnashes his teeth. ... He winds a red noose

about the body of an enemy at the same time as he thrusts a lance into the heart of another” (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, p. 224).

A puzzling red-brown leather mask also hung in the temple, which showed the face of a three-eyed wrathful demon. Legend tells that it was made from clotted human blood and sometimes becomes alive to the horror of all. Alongside the sacred room of the *Red Tsiu* lay a small, ill-lit chamber. If a person died, said the monks, then his soul would have to slip through a narrow hole into this room and would be cut to pieces there upon a chopping block. Of a night the cries and groans of the maltreated souls could be heard and a revolting stench of blood spread through the whole building. The block was replaced every year since it had been worn away by the many blows.

*Guru Rinpoche*, the former incarnation of the Dalai Lama, was a explosive mixture of strict ascetic and sorcerer, apostle and adventurer, monk and vagabond, founder of a culture and criminal, mystic and eroticist, lawmaker and mountebank, politician and exorcist. He had such success because he resolved the tension between civilization and wildness, divinity and the daemonic within his own person. For, according to tantric logic, he could only defeat the demons by himself becoming a demon. For this reason Fokke Sierksma also characterizes him as an uninhibited usurper: “He was a conqueror, obsessed by lust of power and concupiscence, only this conqueror did not choose the way of physical, but that of spiritual violence, in accordance with the Indian tradition that the Yogin’s concentration of energy subdues matter, the world and gods” (Sierksma, 1966, p. 111).

The orthodox Gelugpas also pull the arch magician to pieces in general. For example, one document accuses him of having devoted himself to the pursuit of women of a night clothed in black, and to drink of a day, and to have described this decadent practice as “the sacrifice of the ten days” (Hoffmann, 1956, p. 55).

It was different with the Fifth Dalai Lama — for him *Guru Rinpoche* was the force which tamed the wilds of the Land of Snows with his magic arts, as had no other before him and none who came after. As magic was likewise for the “Great Fifth” the preferred style of weapon, he could justifiably call upon Padmasambhava as his predecessor and master. The various guises of the guru which appeared before the ruler of the Potala in his visions are thus also numerous and of great intensity. In them Padmasambhava touched his royal pupil upon the forehead a number of times with a jewel and thus transferred his power to him. *Guru Rinpoche* became the “house prophet” of the “Great Fifth” — he advised the hierarch, foretold the future for him, and intervened in the practical politics from beyond, which fundamentally transformed the history of Tibet (through the establishment of the Buddhist state) almost 900 years after his death.

The “Emperor” Songtsen Gampo and the “Magician-Priest” Padmasambhava, the principal early heroes of the Land of Snows, carried within them the germ of all the future events which would determine the fate of the Tibetans. Centuries after their earthly existence, both characters were welded together into the towering figure of the Fifth Dalai Lama. The one represented worldly power, the other the spiritual. As an incarnation of both the one and the other, the Dalai Lama was also entitled and able to exercise both forms of power. Just how close a relationship he brought the two into is revealed by one of his visions in which Guru Rinpoche and King Songtsen Gampo swapped their appearances with lightning speed and thus became a single person. A consequence of the Dalai Lama’s strong identification with the arch-magician was that his chief yogini, Yeshe Tshogyal, also appeared all the more often in his envisionings. She became the preferred *inana mudra* of the “Great Fifth”.

Under the rule of Trisong Detsen (who fetched Padmasambhava into Tibet) the famous Council of Lhasa also took place. The king ordered the staging of a large-scale debate between two Buddhist schools of opinion: the teachings of the Indian, Kamalashila, which said that the way to enlightenment was a graded progression and the Chinese position, which demanded the immediate, spontaneous achievement of enlightenment, which suddenly and unexpectedly unfolded in its full dimensions. The representative of the spontaneity doctrine was Hoshang Mahoyen, a master of Chinese Chan Buddhism. In Lhasa the Indian doctrine of stages was at the end of a two-year debate victorious. Hoshang is said to have been banished from the land and some of his followers were killed by the disciples of Kamalashila. But the Chinese position has never completely disappeared from Tibetan cultural life and is again gaining respectability. It is quite rightly compared to the so-called Dzogchen teaching, which also believes an immediate act of enlightenment is possible and which is currently especially popular in the West. For example, the important abbot, Sakya Pandita, attacked the Dzogchen practices because they were a latter-day form of the Chinese doctrine which had been refuted at the Council of Lhasa. In contrast the unorthodox Nyingmapa had no problem with the “Chinese way”. These days the Tibetan lama, Norbu Rinpoche, who lives in Italy, appeals explicitly to Hoshang.

Of its nature, the Dzogchen teaching stands directly opposed to state Buddhism. It dissolves all forms at once and it would not be exaggerating if we were to describe it as “spiritual anarchism”. The political genius of the Fifth Dalai Lama, who knew that a Buddhocracy is only sustainable if it can integrate and control the anarchic elements, made constant use of the Dzogchen practice (Samuel, 1993, p. 464). Likewise the current Fourteenth Dalai Lama is said to have been initiated into this discipline, at any rate he counts Dzogchen masters among his most high ranking spiritual intimates.

It is also noteworthy that in feminist circles the famous Council of Lhasa is evaluated as the confrontation between a fundamentally masculine (Indian) and a feminine (Chinese) current within Tibetan Buddhism (Chayet, 1993, pp. 322-323).

### **From anarchy to the discipline of the order: The Tilopa lineage**

The reason the *Maha Siddha* Tilopa (10th century) is worthy of our special attention is because he and his pupil Naropa are the sole historical individuals from the early history of the *Kalachakra Tantra* who count among the founding fathers of several Tibetan schools and because Tilopa's life is exemplary of that of the other 83 "grand sorcerers".

According to legend, the Indian master is said to have reached the wonderland of *Shambhala* and received the time doctrines from the reigning Kalki there. After returning to India, in the year 966 he posted the symbol of the *dasakaro vasi* (the "Power of Ten") on the entrance gates of the monastic university of Nalanda and appended the following lines, already quoted above: "He, that does not know the chief first Buddha (*Adi-Buddha*), knows not the *circle of time* (*Kalachakra*). He, that does not know the circle of time, knows not the exact enumeration of the divine attributes. He that does not know the exact enumeration of the divine attributes, knows not the supreme intelligence. He, that does not know the supreme intelligence, knows not the tantrica principles. He, that does not know the tantrica principles, and all such, are wanderers in the orb *transmigratos*, and are out of the way of the supreme triumphator. Therefore *Adi-Buddha* must be taught by every true Lama, and every true disciple who aspires to liberation must hear them" (Körös, 1984, pp. 21-22).

While he was still a very young child, a dakini bearing the 32 signs of ugliness appeared to Tilopa and proclaimed his future career as a *Maha Siddha* to the boy in his cradle. From now on this witch, who was none other than *Vajrayogini*, became the teacher of the guru-to-be and inducted him step by step in the knowledge of enlightenment. Once she appeared to him in the form of a prostitute and employed him as a servant. One of his duties was to pound sesame seeds (*tila*) through which he earned his name. As a reward for the services he performed, *Vajrayogini* made him the leader of a *ganachakra*.

Tilopa always proved to be the androgynous sovereign of the gender roles. Hence he one day let the sun and the moon plummet from heaven and rode over them upon a lion, that is, he destroyed the masculine and feminine energy flows and controlled them with the force of *Rahu* the darkener. At another point, in order to demonstrate his control over the gender polarity, he was presented as the murderer of a human couple "who the beat in the skulls of the man and the woman" (Grünwedel, 1933, p. 72).

Another dramatic scene tells of how dakinis angrily barred his way when he wanted to enter the palace of their head sorceress and cried out in shrill voices: "We are flesh-eating dakinis. We enjoy flesh and are greedy for blood. We will devour your flesh, drink of your blood, and transform your bones into dust and ashes" (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 207). Tilopa defeated them with the gesture of fearlessness, a furious bellow and a penetrating stare. The witches collapsed in a faint and spat blood. On his way to the queen he encountered further female monsters which he hunted down in the same manner. Finally, in the interior of the palace he met *Inana Dakini*, the custodian of tantric knowledge, surrounded by a great retinue. But he did not bow down before her throne, and sank instead into a meditative stance. All present were outraged and barked at him in anger

that before him stood the “Mother of all Buddhas”. According to one version — which is recounted by Alexandra David-Neel — Tilopa now roused himself from his contemplation, and, approaching the queen with a steady gait, stripped her of her clothes jewelry and demonstrated his male superiority by raping her before the assembled gaze of her entire court (Hoffmann, 1956, p. 149).

Tilopa’s character first becomes three dimensional when we examine his relationship with his pupil, Naropa. The latter first saw the light of the world in the year of the masculine fire dragon as the son of a king and queen. Later he at first refused to marry, but then did however succumb to the will of his parents. The marriage did not last long and was soon dissolved. Naropa offered the following reason: “Since the sins of a woman are endless, in the face of the swamp mud of deceptive poison my spirit would take on the nature of a bull, and hence I will become a monk” (Grünwedel, 1933, p. 54). His young spouse agreed to the divorce and accepted all the blame: “He is right!”, she said to his parents, “I have endless sins, I am absolutely without merit ... For this reason and on these grounds it is appropriate to put an end to [the union of] us two” (Grünwedel, 1933, p. 54). Afterwards Naropa was ordained as a monk and went on to become the abbot of what was at the time the most important of the Buddhist monastic universities, Nalanda.

Nevertheless, one day the ecclesiastical dignitary renounced his clerical privileges just as he had done with his royal ones and roamed the land as a beggar in search of his teacher, Tilopa. He had learned of the latter’s existence from the dakini with the 32 markings of ugliness (*Vajrayogini*). While he was reading the holy texts in Nalanda, she cast a threatening shadow across his books. She laughed at him derisively because he believed he could understand the meaning of the tantras by reading them.

After Naropa had with much trouble located his master, a grotesque scene, peerless even in the tantric literature, was played out. Tilopa fooled his pupil with twelve horrific apparitions before finally initiating him. On the first occasion he appeared as a foul-smelling, leprous woman. He then burnt fish that were still alive over a fire in order to eat them afterwards. At a cemetery he slit open the belly of a living person and washed it out with dirty water. In the next scene the master had skewered his own father with a stake and was in the process of killing his mother held captive in the cellar. On another occasion Naropa had to beat his penis with a stone until it spurted blood. At another time Tilopa required of him that he vivisect himself.

In order to reveal the world to be an illusion, the tantra master had his pupil commit one crime after another and presented himself as a dastardly criminal. Naropa passed every test and became one of the finest experts and commentators on the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

One of his many pupils was the Tibetan, Marpa (1012-1097). Naropa initiated him into the secret tantric teachings. After further initiations from burial ground dakinis, whom Marpa defeated with

the help of Tilopa who appeared from the beyond, and after encountering the strange yogi, Kukkuri ("dog ascetic"), he returned from India to his home country. He brought several tantra texts back with him and translated these into the national language, giving him his epithet of the "translator". In Tibet he married several women, had many sons and led a household. He is said to have performed the tantric rites with his head wife, Dagmema. In contrast to the yoginis of the legendary *Maha Siddhas*, Dagmema displays very individualized traits and thus forms a much-cited exception among the ranks of female Tibetan figures. She was sincere, clever, shrewd, self-controlled and industrious. Besides this she had independent of her man her own possessions. She cared for the family, worked the fields, supervised the livestock and fought with the neighbors. In a word, she closely resembled a normal housewife in the best sense.

A monastic interpretation of Marpa's "ordinary" life circumstances reveals, however, how profoundly the anarchist dimension dominated the consciousness of the yogis at that time: Marpa's "normality" was not considered a good deed of his because it counted as moral in the dominant social rules of the time, but rather, in contrast, because he had taken the most difficult of all exercises upon himself in that he realized his enlightenment in the so despised "normality". "People of the highest capacity can and should practice like that" (Chökyi, 1989, p. 143). Effectively this says that family life is a far greater hindrance to the spiritual development of a tantra master than a crematorium. This is what Marpa's pupil, Milarepa, also wanted to indicate when he rejected marriage for himself with the following words: "Marpa had married for the purpose of serving others, but ... if I presumed to imitate him without being endowed with his purity of purpose and his spiritual power, it would be the hare's emulation of the lion's leap, which would surely end in my being precipitated into the chasm of destruction" (R. Paul, 1982, p. 234)

Marpa's pragmatic personality, especially his almost egalitarian relationship with his wife, is unique in the history of Tibetan monasticism. It has not been ruled out that he conceived of a reformed Buddhism, in which the sex roles were supposed to be balanced out and which strove towards the normality of family relationships. Hence, he also wanted to make his successor his son, who lost his life in an accident, however. For this reason he handed his knowledge on to Milarepa (1052–1135), who was supposed to continue the classic androcentric lineage of the *Maha Siddhas*.

Milarepa's family were maliciously cheated by relatives when he was in his youth. In order to avenge himself, he became trained as a black magician and undertook several deadly acts of revenge against his enemies. According to legend his mother is supposed to have spurred him on here. In the face of the unhappiness he had caused, he saw the error of his ways and sought refuge in the Buddhist teachings. After a lengthy hesitation, Marpa took him on as a pupil and increased his strictness towards him to the point of brutality so that Milarepa could work off his bad karma through his own suffering. Time and again the pupil had to build a house which his teacher repeatedly tore down. After Milarepa subsequently meditated for seven nights upon the bones of his dead mother (!), he attained enlightenment. In his poems he does not just celebrate the gods, but also the beauty of nature. This "natural" talent and inclination has earned him many admirers up until the present day.

Like his teacher, Marpa, Milarepa is primarily revered for his humanity, a rare quality in the history of *Vajrayana*. There is something so realistic about Marpa's arbitrariness and the despair of his pupil that they move many believers in Buddhism more than the phantasmagoric cemetery scenes we are accustomed to from the *Maha Siddhas* and Padmasambhava. For this reason the ill treatment of Milarepa by his guru counts among the best-known scenes of Tibetan hagiography. Yet after his initiation events also became fantastic in his case. He transformed himself into all manner of animals, defeated a powerful Bon magician and thus conquered the mountain of Kailash. But the death of this superhuman is once again just as human as that of the Buddha Shakyamuni. He died after drinking poisoned milk given him by an envious person. The historical Buddha passed away at the age of 80 after consuming poisoned pork.

Milarepa's sexual life oscillated between ascetic abstinence and tantric practices. There are several misogynous poems by him. When the residents of a village offered the poet a beautiful girl as his bride, he sang the following song:

At first, the lady is like a heavenly angel;  
The more you look at her, the more you want to gaze.  
Middle-aged, she becomes a demon with a corpse's eyes;  
You say one word to her and she shouts back two.  
She pulls your hair and hits your knee.  
You strike her with your staff, but back she throws a ladle....  
I keep away from women to avoid fights and quarrels.  
For the young bride you mentioned, I have no appetite.

(Stevens, 1990, p. 75)

The yogi constantly warned of the destructive power of women, and attacked them as troublemakers, as the source of all suffering. Like all the prominent followers of Buddha he was exposed to sexual temptations a number of times. Once a demoness caused a huge vagina to appear before him. Milarepa inserted a phallus-like stone into it and thus exorcised the magic. He conducted a *ganachakra* with the beautiful Tserinma and her four sisters.

Milarepa's pupil, Gampopa (1079–1153), drew the wild and anarchic phase of the Tilopa lineage to a close. This man with a clear head who had previously practiced as a doctor and became a monk because of a tragic love affair in which his young wife had died, brought with him sufficient organizational talent to overcome the antisocial traits of his predecessors. Before he met Milarepa, he was initiated into the Kadampa order, an organization which could be traced back to the Indian scholar, Atisha, and already had an statist character. As he wanted to leave them to take the yogi poet (Milarepa) as his teacher, his brethren from the order asked Gampopa, "Aren't our teachings enough?" When he nonetheless insisted, they said to him: "Go, but [do] not abandon our habit." (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 2, p. 494). Gampopa abided by this warning, but likewise he took to heart the following critical statement by Milarepa: "The Kadampa have teachings, but practical teachings they have not. The Tibetans, being possessed by evil spirits, would not allow the Noble Lord (Atisha) to preach the Mystic Doctrine. Had they done so, Tibet would have been filled with saints by this time" (Bell, 1994, p. 93).

The tension between the rigidity of the monastic state and the anarchy of the *Maha Siddhas* is well illustrated by these two comments. If we further follow the history of Tibetan Buddhism, we can see that Gampopa abided more closely to the rules of his original order and only let himself be temporarily seduced by the wild life of the "mountain ascetic", Milarepa. In the long term he is thus to be regarded as a conqueror of the anarchic currents. Together with one of his pupils he founded the Kagyupa order.

The actual chief figure in the establishment of the Tibetan monastic state was the above-mentioned Atisha (982–1054). The son of a prince from Bengal already had a marriage and nine children behind him before he decided to seek refuge in the *sangha*. Among others, Naropa was one of his teachers. In the year 1032, after several requests from the king of Guge (southern Tibet), he went to the Land of Snows in order to reform Buddhism there. In 1050, Atisha organized a council in which Indians also participated alongside many Tibetan monks. The chief topic of this meeting was the "Re-establishment of religion in Tibet".

Under Tantrism the country had declined into depravity. Crimes, murders, orgies, black magic, and lack of discipline were no longer rare in the *sangha* (monastic community). Atisha opposed this with his well-organized and disciplined monastic model, his moral rectitude and his high standard of ethics. A pure lifestyle and true orderly discipline were now required. The rules of celibacy applied once more. An orthodoxy was established, but Tantrism was in no sense abolished, but rather subjected to maximum strictness and control. Atisha introduced a new time-keeping system into Tibet which was based upon the calendar of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, through which this work became exceptionally highly regarded.

Admittedly there is a story which tells of how a wild dakini initiated him in a cemetery, and he also studied for three years at the notorious Uddiyana from whence Padmasambhava came, but his lifestyle was from the outset clear and exact, clean and disciplined, temperate and strict. This is especially apparent in his choice of female yiddam (divine appearance), *Tara*. Atisha bought the

cult of the Buddhist “Madonna” to Tibet with him. One could say he carried out a “Marianization” of Tantric Buddhism. *Tara* was essentially quite distinct from the other female deities in her purity, mercifulness, and her relative asexuality. She is the “spirit woman” who also played such a significant role in the reform of other androcentric churches, as we can see from the example provided by the history of the Papacy.

At the direction of his teacher, Atisha’s pupil Bromston founded community of Kadampas whom we have already mentioned above, a strict clerical organization which later became an example for all the orders of the Land of Snows including the Nyingmapas and the remainder of the pre-Buddhist Bonpos. But in particular it paved the way for the victory march of the Gelugpas. This order saw itself as the actual executors of Atisha’s plans. With it the nationalization of Tibetan monasticism began. This was to reach its historical high point in the institutionalization of the office of the Dalai Lama.

### **The pre-planned counterworld to the clerical bureaucracy: Holy fools**

The archetype of the anarchist *Maha Siddha* is primarily an Indian phenomenon. Later in Tibet it is replaced by that of the “holy fools”, that is, of the roaming yogis with an unconventional lifestyle. While the “grand sorcerers” of India still enjoyed supreme spiritual authority, before which abbots and kings had to bow, the holy fools only acted as a social pressure valve. Everything wild, anarchic, unbridled, and oppositional in Tibetan society could be diverted through such individuals, so that the repressive pressure of the Buddhocracy did not too much gain the upper hand and incite real and dangerous revolts. The role of the holy fools was thus, in contrast to that of the *Maha Siddhas*, planned in advance and arranged by the state and hence a part of the absolutist Buddhocracy. John Ardussi and Lawrence Epstein have encapsulated the principal characteristics of this figure in six points:

1. A general rejection of the usual social patterns of behavior especially the rules of the clerical establishment.
2. A penchant for bizarre clothing.
3. A cultivated non-observance of politeness, above all with regard to respect for social status.
4. A publicly proclaimed contempt for scholasticism, in particular a mockery of religious study through books alone.
5. The use of popular poetic forms, of mimicry, song, and stories as a means of preaching.
6. The frequent employment of obscene insinuations (Ardussi and Epstein, 1978, pp. 332–333).

These six characteristics do not involve a true anarchist rejection of state Buddhism. At best, the holy fools made fun of the clerical authorities, but they never attacked these as such.

The roaming yogis primarily became famous for their completely free and uninhibited sexual morals and thus formed a safety valve for thousands of abstinent monks living in celibacy, who were subjected to extreme sexual pressure by the tantric symbolism. What was forbidden for the ordained monastery inmates was lived out to the full by the vagabond “crazy monks”: They praised the size of their phallus, boasted about the number of women they had possessed, and drifted from village to village as sacred Casanovas. Drukpa Kunley (1455–1529) was the most famous of them. He sings his own praises in a lewd little song:

People say Drukpa Kunley is utterly mad

In Madness all sensory forms are the Path!

People say Drukpa Kunley's organ is immense

His member brings joy to the hearts of young girls!

(quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 77)

Kunley's biography begins with him lying in bed with his mother and trying to seduce her. As, after great resistance, she was prepared to surrender to her son's will, he, a master of tantric semen retention, suddenly springs up and leaves her. Amazingly, this uninhibited outsider was a member of the strict Kadampa order — this too can only be understood once we have recognized the role of the fool as a paradoxical instrument of control.

### **An anarchist erotic: The Sixth Dalai Lama**

At first glance it may appear absurd to include the figure of the Sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso (1683-1706), in a chapter on “Anarchism and Buddhocracy”, yet we do have our reasons for doing so. Opinions are divided about this individual: for those who are sympathetic towards him, he counts as a rebel, a popular hero, a *poète maudit*, a Bohemian, a romantic on the divine throne, an affectionate eroticist, as clever and attractive. The others, who view him with disgust, hold him to be a heretic and besmircher of the Lion Throne, reckless and depraved. Both groups nonetheless describe him as extremely apolitical.

He became well-known and notorious above all through his love poems, which he dedicated to several attractive inhabitants of Lhasa. Their self-ironic touch, melancholy and subtle mockery of the bureaucratic Lamaist state have earned them a place in the literature of the world. For example, the following five-line poem combines all three elements:

When I'm at the Potala Monastery

They call me the Learned Ocean of Pure Song;

When I sport in the town,

I'am known as the Handsome Rogue who loves Sex!.

(quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 78)

The young “poet prince” stood in impotent opposition to the reigning regent, Sangye Gyatso (1653-1705), who claimed the power of state for himself alone. The relationship between the two does not lack a certain piquancy if, following Helmut Hoffmann, one assumes that the regent was the biological son of the “Great Fifth” and thus stood opposed to the Sixth Dalai Lama as the youthful incarnation of his own father. Nevertheless, this did not prevent him from treating the young “god-king” as a marionette in his power play with the Chinese and Mongolians. When the Dalai Lama expressed own claim to authority, his “sinful activities “ were suddenly found to be so offensive that his abdication was demanded.

Oddly enough the sixth *Kundun* accepted this without great pause, and in the year 1702 decided to hand his spiritual office over to the Panchen Lama; his worldly authority, however, which he *de jure* but never *de facto* exercised, he wanted to retain. This plan did not come to fruition, however. A congregation of priests determined that the spirit of *Avalokiteshvara* had left him and appointed an opposing candidate. In the general political confusion which now spread through the country, in which the regent, Sangye Gyatso, lost his life, the 24-year-old Sixth Dalai Lama was also murdered. Behind the deed lay a conspiracy between the Chinese Emperor and the Mongolian Prince, Lhabsang Khan. Nonetheless, according to a widely distributed legend, the “god-king” was not killed but lived on anonymously as a beggar and pilgrim and was said to have still appeared in the country under his subsequent incarnation, the Seventh Dalai Lama.

Western historians usually see a tragic aesthete in the figure of the poet prince, who with his erotic lines agreeably broke through the merciless power play of the great lamas. We are not entirely convinced by this view. In contrast, in our view Tsangyang Gyatso was all but dying to attain and exercise worldly power in Tibet, as was indeed his right. It is just that to this end he did not make use of the usual political means, believing instead that he could achieve his goal by practicing sexual magic rites. He firmly believed in what stood in the holy texts of the tantras; he was convinced that could gain power over the state via “sexual anarchy”.

The most important piece of information which identifies him as a practicing Tantric is the much-quoted saying of his: „Although I sleep with a woman every night, I never lose a drop of semen”

(quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 78). With this statement he not only justified his scandalous relationships with women; he also wanted to express the fact that his love life was in the service of his high office as supreme *vajra* master. One story tells of how, in the presence of his court, he publicly urinated from the platform roof of the Potala in a long arc and was able to draw his urine back into his penis. Through this performance he wanted to display the evidence that in his much-reproached love life he behaved correctly and in accordance with the tantric codex, indeed that he had even mastered the difficult draw-back technique (the *Vajroli* method) needed in order to appropriate the female seed (Schulemann, 1958, p. 284). It is not very difficult to see from the following poem that his rendezvous were for him about the absorption of the male-female fluids.

Glacier-water (from) 'Pure Crystal Mountain'

Dew-drops from (the herb) 'Thunderbolt of Demonic Serpent'

(Enriched by) the balm of tonic elixir;

(Let) the Wisdom-Enchantress(es)

be the liquor-girl(s):

If you drink with a pure commitment

Infernal damnation need not be tasted.

(see Sorensen, 1990, p. 113)

Other verses of his also make unmistakable references to sexual magic practices (Sorensen, 1990, p. 100). He himself wrote several texts which primarily concern the terror deity, *Hayagriva*. From a tantric point of view his "seriousness" would also not have been reduced by his getting involved with barmaids and prostitutes, but rather in contrast, it would have been all but proven, because according to the law of inversion, of course, the highest arises from the most lowly. He is behaving totally in the spirit of the Indian *Maha Siddhas* when he sings:

If the bar-girl does not falter,

The beer will flow on and on.

This maiden is my refuge,

and this place my haven.

(Stevens, 1990, p. 78, 79)

He ordered the construction of a magnificently decorated room within the Potala probably for the performance of his tantric rites and which he cleverly called the “snake house”. In his external appearance as well, the “god-king” was a *Vajrayana* eccentric who evoked the long-gone magical era of the great Siddhas. Like them, he let his hair grow long and tied it in a knot. Heavy earrings adorned his lobes, on every finger he wore a valuable ring. But he did not run around naked like many of his role-models. In contrast, he loved to dress magnificently. His brocade and silk clothing were admired by Lhasa’s *jeunesse dorée* with whom he celebrated his parties.

But these were all just externals. Alexandra David-Neel’s suspicion is obviously spot on when she assumes: “Tsangyang Gyatso was apparently initiated into methods which in our terms allow or even encourage a life of lust and which also really signified dissipation for anyone not initiated into this strange schooling” (Hoffmann, 1956, 178, 179).

We know that in the tantric rituals the individual *karma mudras* (wisdom girls) can represent the elements, the stars, the planets, even the divisions of time. Why should they not also represent aspects of political power? There is in fact such a “political” interpretation of the erotic poems of the Sixth Dalai Lama by Per K. Sorensen. The author claims that the poetry of the god-king used the erotic images as allegories: the “tiger girl” conquered in a poem by the sixth *Kundun* is supposed to symbolize the clan chief of the Mongols (Sorensen, 1990, p. 226). The “sweet apple” or respectively the “virgin” for whom he reaches out are regarded as the “fruits of power” (Sorensen, 1990, p. 279). Sorensen reinterprets the “love for a woman” as the “love of power” when he writes: “We shall tentatively attempt to read the constant allusion to the girl and the beloved as yet a hidden reference to the appropriation of real power, a right of which he [the Sixth Dalai Lama] was unjustly divested by a despotic and complacent Regent, who in actual fact demonstrated a conspicuous lack of interest in sharing any part of the power with the young ruler” (Sorensen, 1990, p. 48).

But this is a matter of much more than allegories. A proper understanding of the tantras instantly makes the situation clear: the Sixth Dalai Lama was constantly conducting tantric rituals with his girls in order to attain real power in the state. In his mind, his *karma mudras* represented various energies which he wanted to acquire via his sexual magic practices so as to gain the power to govern which was being withheld from him. If he composed the lines

As long as the pale moon

Dwells over the East Mountain,

I draw strength and bliss

### From the girl's body

(Koch, 1960, p. 172)

- then this was with power-political intentions. Yet some of his lines are of such a deep melancholy that he probably was not able to always keep up his tantric control techniques and had actually fallen deeply in love. The following poem may indicate this:

I went to the wise jewel, the lama,  
And asked him to lead my spirit.  
Often I sat at his feet,  
But my thoughts crowded around  
The image of the girl.  
The appearance of the god  
I could not conjure up.  
Your beauty alone stood before my eyes,  
And I wanted to catch the most holy teaching.  
It slipped through my hands, I count the hours  
Until we embrace again.

(Koch, 1960, p. 173)

### A tantric history of Tibet

The following, Seventh Dalai Lama (1708-1757) was the complete opposite of his predecessor. Until now no comparisons between the two have been made. Yet this would be worthwhile, then whilst the one represented wildness, excess, fantasy, and poetry, his successor relied upon strict observance, bureaucracy, modesty, and learning. The tantric scheme of anarchy and order, which the "Great Fifth" ingeniously combined within his person, fell apart again with both of his immediate successors. Nothing interested the Seventh Dalai Lama more than the state bureaucratic consolidation of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. He commissioned the Namgyal Institute, which still today looks after this task, with the ritual performance of the external time doctrine. Apart from this he introduced a *Kalachakra* prayer into the general liturgy of the Gelugpa order

which had to be recited on the eighth day of every Tibetan month. We are also indebted to him for the construction of the *Kalachakra* sand mandala and the choreography of the complicated dances which still accompany the ritual.

Anarchy and state Buddhism thus do not need to contradict one another. They could both be coordinated with each other. Above all, the “Great Fifth” had recognized the secret: the Land of Snows was to be got the better of through pure statist authority, it had to be controlled tantrically, that is, the chaos and anarchy had to be integrated as part of the Buddhocracy. Applied to the various Tibetan religious schools this meant that if he were to succeed in combining the puritanical, bureaucratic, centralizing, disciplined, industrious, and virtuous qualities of the *Gelugpas* with the libertarian, phantasmagorical, magic, and decentralizing characteristics of the *Nyingmapas*, then absolute control over the Land of Snows must be attainable. All the other orders could be located between these two extremes.

Such an undertaking had to achieve something which in the views of the time was impossible, then the *Gelugpas* were a product of a radical critique of the sexual dissolution and other excesses of the *Nyingmapas*. But the political-religious genius of the Fifth Dalai Lama succeeded in this impossible enterprise. The self-disciplined administrator upon the Lion Throne preferred to see himself as Padmasambhava (the root guru of the Nyingmapas) and declared his lovers to be embodiments of Yeshe Tshogyal (Padmasambhava’s the wisdom consort). Tibet received a ruler over state and anarchy.

The political mythic history of the Land of Snows thus falls into line with a tantric interpretation. At the beginning of all the subsequent historical events stands the shackling of the chaotic earth goddess, *Srinmo*, by the king, Songtsen Gampo, (the conquest of the *karma mudra* by the yogi). Through this, the power of the masculine method (*upaya*) over the feminine wisdom (*prajna*) invoked in the sexual magic ritual precedes the supremacy of the state over anarchy, of civilization over wilderness, of culture over nature. The English anthropologist, Geoffrey Samuel, thus speaks of a synthesis which arose from the dialectic between anti-state/anarchist and clerical/statist Buddhism in Tibet, and recognizes in this interrelationship a unique and fruitful dynamic. He believes the Tibetan system displays an amazingly high degree of fluidity, openness, and choice. This is his view of things.

But for us, Samuel is making a virtue of necessity. We would see it exactly the other way around: the contradiction between the two hostile extremes (anarchy and the state) led to social tensions which subjected Tibetan society to an ongoing acid test. One has to be clear that the tantric scheme produces a culture of extreme dissonance which admittedly sets free great amounts of energy but has neither led historically to a peaceful and harmonic society to the benefit of all beings nor can do so in the future.

Samuel makes a further mistake when he opposes clerical *state* Buddhism to wild *tantric* Buddhism as equal counterpoles. We have shown often enough that the function of control (*upaya*) is the more important element of the tantric ritual, more important and more steadfast than the temporary letting loose of wild passions. Nevertheless the contradiction between wildness (feminine chaos) and taming (masculine control) remains a fundamental pattern of every sexual magic project — this is the reason that (“controlled”) anarchy is a part of the Tibetan “state theology” and thus it was never, neither for Atisha nor Tsongkhapa, the two founding fathers of state Buddhism, a question of whether the tantras should be abolished. In contrast, both successfully made an effort to strengthen and extend the control mechanisms within the tantric rites.

If the “political theology” of Lamaism applies the tantric pattern to Tibetan society, then — from a metaphysical viewpoint — it deliberately produces chaos to the point of disintegration so as to *ex nihilo* establish law and order anew. *Internally*, the production of chaos takes place within the mystic body of the yogi via the unchaining of the all-destroying *Candali*. Through this *internal* fragmentation the yogi is completely “freed” of his earthly personality so as to be re-created as the emanation of the spiritual horde of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and protective deities who are at work behind all reality.

This inverted logic of the tantras corresponds on an *outwardly* level to the production of anarchy by the Buddhist state. The roaming “holy fools”, the wild lives of the grand sorcerers (*Maha Siddhas*), the excesses of the founding father, Padmasambhava, the still to be described institution of the Tibetan “scapegoats” and the public debauchery during the New Year’s festivities connected with this, yes, even the erotic games of the Sixth Dalai Lama are such anarchist elements, which stabilize the Buddhocracy in general. They must — following the tantric laws — reckon with their own destruction (we shall return to this point in connection with the “sacrifice” of Tibet), then it legitimates itself through the ability to transform disorder into order, crime into good deeds, decline and fall into resurrection. In order to implement its program, but also so as to prove its omnipotence, the Buddhist Tantric state — deliberately — creates for itself chaotic scenarios, it cancels law and custom, justice and virtue, authority and obedience in order to, after a stage of chaos, re-establish them. In other words it uses revolution to achieve restoration. We shall soon see that the Fourteenth Dalai Lama conducts this interplay on the world stage.

It nonetheless remains to be considered that the authority of Tibetan state Buddhism has not surmounted the reality of a limited dominion of monastic orders. There can be no talk of a *Chakravartin*’s the exercise of power, of a world ruler, at least not in the visible world. From a historical point of view the institution of the Dalai Lama remained extremely weak, measured by the standards of its claims, unfortunately all but powerless. Of the total of fourteen Dalai Lamas only one is can be described as a true potentate: the “Great Fifth”, in whom the institution actually found its beginnings and whom it has never outgrown. All other Dalai Lamas were extremely limited in their abilities with power or died before they were able to govern. Even the Thirteenth, who is sometimes accorded special powers and therefore also referred to as the “Great”, only survived because the superpowers of the time, England and Russia, were unable to reach agreement on the division of Tibet. Nonetheless the institution of the god-king has exercised a

strong attraction over all of Central Asia for centuries and cleverly understood how to render its field of competence independent of the visible standards of political reality and to construct these as a magic occult field of forces of which even the Emperor of China was nervous.

### **"Crazy wisdom" and the West**

Already in the nineteen twenties, the voices of modern western, radical-anarchist artists could be heard longing for and invoking the Buddhocracy of the Dalai Lama. "O Grand Lama, give us, grace us with your illuminations in a language our contaminated European minds can understand, and if need be, transform our Mind ..." (Bishop, 1989, p. 239). These melodramatic lines are the work of Antonin Artaud (1896-1948). The dramatist was one of the French intellectuals who in 1925 called for a "surrealist revolution". With his idea of the "theater of horrors", in which he brought the representation of ritual violence to the stage, he came closer to the horror cabinet of Buddhist Tantrism than any other modern dramatist. Artaud's longing for the rule of the Dalai Lama is a graphic example of how an anarchist, asocial world view can tip over into support for a "theocratic" despotism. [1]

There was also a close connection between Buddhism and the American "Beat Generation", who helped decisively shape the youth revolts of the sixties. The poets Jack Kerouac, Alan Watts, Gary Snyder, Allan Ginsberg, and others were, a decade earlier, already attracted by Eastern teachings of wisdom, above all Japanese Zen. They too were particularly interested in the anarchic, ordinary-life despising side of Buddhism and saw in it a fundamental and revolutionary critique of a mass society that suppressed all individual freedom. "It is indeed puzzling", the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* wondered in connection with Tibetan Buddhism, "that many anti-authoritarian, anarchist and feminist influenced former '68ers' [members of the sixties protest movements] are so inspired by a religion which preaches hierarchical structures, self-limiting monastic culture and the authority of the teacher" (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 121).

Alan Watts (1915-1973) was an Englishman who met the Japanese Zen master and philosopher, Daietsu Teitaro Suzuki, in London. He began to popularize Suzuki's philosophy and to reinterpret it into an unconventional and anarchic "lifestyle" which directed itself against the American dream of affluence.

Timothy Leary, who propagated the wonder drug LSD around the whole world and is regarded as a guru of the hippie movement and American subculture, made the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* the basis of his psychedelic experiments. [2]

Already at the start of the fifties Allen Ginsberg had begun experimenting with drugs (peyote, mescaline, and later LSD) in which the wrathful tantric protective deities played a central role. He

included these in his “consciousness-expanding sessions”. When he visited the Dalai Lama in India in 1962, he was interested to know what His Holiness thought of LSD. The Kundun replied with a counter-question, however, and wanted to find out whether Ginsberg could, under influence of the drug, see what was in a briefcase that was in the room. The poet answered yes, the case was empty. It was! (*Shambhala Sun*, July 1995).

The Tibetan Lama Dudjom Rinpoche, the then leader of the Nyingmapa, later explained the emptiness of all things to him. When Ginsberg asked him for advice about how he should deal with his LSD horror trips, the Rinpoche answered, “If you see something horrible, don’t cling to it, and if you see something beautiful, don’t cling to it” (*Shambhala Sun*, July 1995). This statement became the life-maxim of the beat poets.

In Sikkim in 1962, Ginsberg participated in the Black Hat ceremony of the Karmapa and at that early stage met the young Chögyam Trungpa. Ten years later (1972) he was quoting radical poems together with him at spectacular events. At these “readings” both “Buddha poets” lived out their anarchist feelings to the full, with Lama Trungpa usually being drunk.

It demonstrates his ingenious instinct for mental context that the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, when asked whether he ever meditated by Ginsberg, who was in revolt against the state and every form of compulsion, answered, “No, I don’t have to” (*Tricycle*, vol. 5, no. 2, p. 6). In contrast, we have learned from other interviews with His Holiness that he spends four hours meditating every morning, as is proper for a good Buddhist monk. The *Kundun* thus has the appropriate answer ready for whatever the spiritual orientation of his conversation partner may be. Through this he succeeds in making himself popular everywhere.

His nonchalance on this occasion in contrast to the in other contexts strongly emphasized meditative discipline is congruent with Ginsberg’s fundamentally anarchist and anti-authoritarian attitudes. In turn, the latter’s unconventional escapades are compatible with the Tibetan archetype of the “holy fool”. For this reason, Ginsberg also explained his poems to be an expression of “crazy wisdom”, a phrase which soon proved to be a mark of quality for the anti-conventional attitude of many Tibetan lamas in the West.

Within the tantric system of logic, the god-king did not need to fear the chaotic and anti-bourgeois lifestyle of the sixties or its anarchic leaders. Indeed, all the *Maha Siddhas* had been through a wild phase before their enlightenment. The Beat Generation represented an almost ideal starting substance (*prima materia*) for the divine alchemist upon the Lion Throne to experiment with, and he was in fact successful in “ennobling” many of them into propagandists for his Buddhocratic vision.

From the beginning of his artistic career, the famous and unconventional German conceptual artist, Joseph Beuys, saw himself as an initiate of a shamanist/Tartar tradition. He justified his renowned works in felt, a material used primarily by the Mongolian nomads, with his affinity to the culture and religion of the peoples of the steppes. A number of meetings between him and the Dalai Lama occurred, which — without it being much discussed in public — were of decisive significance for the development of the artist's awareness.

In Amsterdam in 1990 famous artists like Robert Rauschenberg and John Cage met with His Holiness. The painter, Roy Lichtenstein, and Philip Glass the composer are also attracted to Buddhism. In 1994 together with the Czech president and former writer, Vaclav Havel, the *Kundun* amused himself over the erotic poems of his anarchist predecessor, the Sixth Dalai Lama.

The god-king is even celebrated in the pop scene. Major stars like David Bowie, Tina Turner, and Patty Smith openly confess their belief in the Buddha's teachings. Monks from the Namgyal monastery, which is especially concerned with the *Kalachakra Tantra*, perform at pop festivals as exotic interludes.

But – as we know — anarchist Buddhism is always only the satyric foreplay to the idea of the Buddhocratic state. Just as wild sexuality is transformed into power in *Vajrayana*, indeed forms the precondition for any power at all, so the anarchist art scene in the West forms the raw material and the transitional phase for the establishment of a totalitarian Buddhocracy. We can observe such a sudden change from anti-authoritarian anarchy into the concept and ideas of an authoritarian state within the person of Chögyam Trungpa, who in the course of his career in the USA has transformed himself from a Dharma freak into a mini-despot with fascistoid allures. We shall later present this example in more detail.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] In 1946 Artaud made a renewed about-face and composed a new pamphlet against the Dalai Lama. In it he attacked the Tibetan clergy as swine, revolting idiots, the cause of syllogism, logic, hysterical mysticism, and dialectic. He accused the lamas of being a warehouse “full of opium, heroin, morphine, hashish, narde, nutmeg, and other poisons” (quoted by Brauen, 2000, p. 92).

[2] See: Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner, and Richard Alphert, *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

## 6. REGICIDE AS LAMAISM'S MYTH OF ORIGIN AND THE RITUAL SACRIFICE OF TIBET

In the first part of our study we described the “tantric female sacrifice” as the central cultic mystery of Tibetan Buddhism. To recap, in the sacrifice feminine energies (*gynergy*) are absorbed in the interests of the androcentric power ambitions of a yogi. The general principle behind this “energy theft”, namely to increase one’s own energy field via the life force of an opponent, is common to all ancient societies. In very “primitive” tribal cultures this “transfer” of life energy was taken literally and one fed upon his slaughtered enemies. The idea that the sacrificer benefited from the strengths and abilities of his sacrifice was a widely distributed topos in the ancient culture of Tibet as well. It applied not just to the sexual magic practices of Tantrism but rather controlled the entire social system. As we shall see, Lamaism sacrificed the Tibetan kingship out of such an ancient way of seeing things, so as to appropriate its energies and legitimate its own *worldly* power.

### Ritual regicide in the history of Tibet and the Tibetan “scapegoat”

The kings of the Tibetan Yarlung dynasty (from the 7th to the start of the 9th centuries C.E.) derived their authority from a divine origin. This was not at all Buddhist and was only reinterpreted as such after the fact. What counted as the proof of their Buddhist origin was a “secret text” (*mani kabum*) first “discovered” by an eager monk 500 years later in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. In it the three most significant Yarlung rulers were identified as emanations of Bodhisattvas: Songtsen Gampo (617–650) as an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*, Trisong Detsen (742–803) as an embodiment of *Manjushri*, and Ralpachan (815–838) as one of *Vajrapani*. Their original, pre-Buddhist myth of origin, in which they were descended from an old race of gods from the heavenly region, was thereby forgotten. From now on in a Lamaist interpretation of history, the kings represented the Buddhist law on earth as *dharmarajas* (“law kings”).

Thanks to older, in part contemporary, documents (from the 8th century) from the caves of Dunhuang, we know that the historical reality was more complex. The Yarlung rulers lived and governed less as strict Buddhists, rather they played the various religious currents in their country off against one another in order to bolster their own power. Sometimes they encouraged the Bon belief, sometimes the immigrant Indian yogis, sometimes the Chinese Chan Buddhists, and sometimes their old shamanist magic priests. Of the various rites and teachings they only took on those which squared with their interests. For example, Songtsen Gampo, the alleged incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*, permitted human and animal sacrifices at the ratification of contracts and his own burial as was usual in the Bon tradition but strictly condemned by the Buddhists.

Alone the penultimate king of the dynasty, Ralpachan, can be regarded as a convicted, even fanatical adherent of Buddhism. This is apparent from, among other things, the text of a law he enacted, which placed the rights of the monks far above those of ordinary people. For example, whoever pointed a finger at one of the ordained risked having it cut off. Anyone who spoke ill of the teaching of the Buddha would have his lips mutilated. Anyone who looked askance at a monk had his eyes poked out, and anyone who robbed one had to repay twenty-five times the worth of the theft. For every seven families in the country the living costs of one monk had to be provided. The ruler totally subjected himself to the religious prescriptions and is said to have joined a *Sangha* (monastic community). It is not surprising that he was murdered in the year 838 C.E. after pushing through such a harsh regime.

### *The murder of King Langdarma*

It is just as unsurprising that his brother, Langdarma, who succeeded him on the throne, wanted to reverse the monastic despotism which Ralpachan had established. Langdarma was firmly resolved to work together with the old Bon forces once again and began with a persecution of the Buddhists, driving them out or forcing them to marry. All their privileges were removed, the Indian yogis were hunted out of the country and the holy texts (the tantras) were burned. For the lamas Langdarma thus still today counts as the arch-enemy of the teaching, an outright incarnation of evil.

But his radical anti-Buddhist activity was to last only four years. In the year 842 his fate caught up with him. His murderer rode into Lhasa upon a white horse blackened with coal and swathed in a black cloak. *Palden Lhamo*, the dreadful tutelary deity of the later Dalai Lamas, had commanded the Buddhist monk, Palgyi Dorje, to “free” Tibet from Langdarma. Since the king thought it was a Bon priest who had called upon him, he granted his murderer an audience. Beneath his robes Palgyi Dorje had hidden a bow and arrow. He knelt down first, but while he was still getting up he shot Langdarma in the chest at close range, fatally wounding him, and crying out: “I am the demon Black Yashe. When anybody wishes to kill a sinful king, let him do it as I have killed this one” (Bell, 1994, p. 48). He then swung himself onto his horse and fled. Underway he washed the animal in a river, so that its white coat reappeared. Then he reversed his black coat which now likewise became white. Thus he was able to escape without being recognized.

Up until the present day official Tibetan history legitimates this “tyrannicide” as a necessary act of desperation by the besieged Buddhists. In order to quiet a bad conscience and to bring the deed into accord with the Buddhist commandment against any form of killing, it soon became evaluated as a gesture of compassion: In being killed, Langdarma was prevented from collecting even more bad karma and plunging ever more people into ruin. Such “compassionate” murders, which — as we shall see — were part of Tibetan state politics, avoided using the word “kill” and replaced it with terms like “rescue” or “liberate”. “To *liberate* the enemy of the doctrine through compassion and lead his consciousness to a better existence is one of the most important vows to be taken

in tantric empowerment”, writes Samten Karmay (Karmay, 1988, p. 72). In such a case all that is required of the “rescuer” is that at the moment of the act of killing he wish the murdered party a good rebirth (Beyer, 1978, pp. 304, 466; Stein, 1993, p. 219).

### *The sacred murder*

But all of this does not make the murder of King Langdarma an exceptional historical event. The early history of Tibet is full of regicides (the murder of kings); of the eleven rulers of the Yarlung dynasty at least six are said to have been killed. There is even a weight of opinion which holds that ritual regicide was a part of ancient Tibetan cultural life. Every regent was supposed to be violently murdered on the day on which his son became able to govern (Tucci, 1953, p. 199f.).

But the truly radical and unique aspect to the killing of Langdarma is the fact that with him the sacred kingship, and the divine order of Tibet associated with it, finally reached its end. Through his murder, the sacrifice of secular rule in favor of clerical power was completed, both really and symbolically, and the monks’ Buddhocracy thus took the place of the autocratic regent. Admittedly this alternative was first fully developed 800 years later under the Fifth Dalai Lama, but in the interim not one worldly ruler succeeded in seizing power over all of Tibet, which the great abbots of the various sects had divided among one another.

Ritual regicide has always been a major topic in anthropology, cultural studies, and psychoanalysis. In his comprehensive work, *The Golden Bough*, James George Frazer declared it to be the origin of all religions. In his essay, *Totem and Taboo*, Sigmund Freud attempts to present the underhand and collective killing of the omnipotent patriarchal father by the young males of a band of apes as the founding act of human culture, and sees every historical regicide as a repetition of this misdeed. The arguments of the psychoanalyst are not very convincing; nevertheless, his basic idea, which sees an act of violence and its ritual repetition as a powerful cultural performance, has continued to occupy modern researchers.

The immense significance of the regicide becomes clear immediately when it is recalled that the ancient kings were in most cases equated with a deity. Thus what took place was not the killing of a person but of a god, usually with the melodramatic intent that the ritually murdered being would be resurrected or that another deity would take his place. Nonetheless, the deed always left deep impressions of guilt and horror in the souls of the executors. Even if the real murder of a king only took place on a single occasion, the event was ineradicably fixed in the awareness of a community. It concentrated itself into a generative principle. By this, René Girard, in his study of *The Violence and the Sacred*, means that a “founding murder” influences all the subsequent cultural and religious developments in a society and that a collective compulsion to constantly repeat it arises, either symbolically or for real. This compulsive repetition occurs for three reasons:

firstly because of the guilt of the murderers who believe that they will be able to exorcise the deed through repetition; secondly, so as to refresh one's own strengths through those which flow from the victim to his murderers; thirdly as a demonstration of power. Hence a chain of religious violence is established, which, however, becomes increasingly "symbolized" the further the community is removed from the original criminal event. In place of human sacrifices, the burning of effigies now emerges.

### *The cham dance*

The murder of King Langdarma was also later replaced by a symbolic repetition in Tibet. The lamas repeat the crime in an annually performed dance mystery, the *ham dance*. There are particular sequences which depend upon the location and time, and each sect has its own choreography. There are always several historical and mythical events to be performed. But at the heart of this mystery play there always stands the ritual sacrifice of an "enemy of the religion" for whom Langdarma furnishes the archetype.

As it is a ritual, a cham performance can only be carried out by ordained monks. It is also referred to as the "dance of the black hats" in remembrance of the black hat which the regicide, Palgyi Dorje, wore when carrying out his crime and which are now worn by several of the players. Alongside the Black Hat priests a considerable number of mostly zoomorphic-masked dancers take part. Animal figures perform bizarre leaps: crows, owl, deer, yak, and wolf. *Yama*, the horned god of the dead, plays the main role of the "Red Executioner".

In the center of a outdoor theater the lamas have erected a so-called *lingam*. This is an anthropomorphic representation of an enemy of the faith, in the majority of cases a likeness of King Langdarma. Substitutes for a human heart, lungs, stomach and entrails are fashioned into the dough figure and everything is doused in a red blood-like liquid. Austine Waddell claims to have witnessed on important occasions in Lhasa that real body parts are collected from the Ragyab cemetery with which to fill the dough figure (Waddell, 1991, p. 527).



***Yama – the death god as Cham dancer***

Afterwards, the masked figures dance around the *lingam* with wild leaps to the sounds of horns, cymbals, and drums. Then *Yama*, the bull-headed god of the dead, appears and pierces the heart, the arms and legs of the figure with his weapon and ties its feet up with a rope. A bell tolls, and *Yama* begins to lop off the victim's limbs and slit open his chest with his sword. Now he tears out the bloody heart and other internal organs which were earlier placed inside the lingam. In some versions of the play he then eats the "flesh" and drinks the "blood" with a healthy appetite.

In others, the moment has arrived in which the animal demons (the masked dancers) fall upon the already dismembered *lingam* and tear it apart for good. The pieces are flung in all directions.

Assistant devils collect the scattered fragments in human skulls and in a celebratory procession bring them before *Yama*, seated upon a throne. With a noble gesture he takes one of the bloody pieces and calmly consumes it before giving the rest free for general consumption with a hand signal. At once, the other mystery players descend and try to catch hold of something. A wild free-for-all now results, in which many pieces of the *lingam* are deliberately thrown into the crowded audience. Everybody grabs a fragment which is then eaten.

In this clearly cannibalist scene the clerical cham dancers want to appropriate some of the life energy of the royal victim. Here too, the ancient idea that an enemy's powers are transferred to oneself through killing and eating them is the barely concealed intention. Thus every cham performance repeats on an "artistic" level the political appropriation of secular royal power by Lamaism. But we must always keep in mind that the distinction between symbol and reality which we find normal does not exist within a tantric culture. Therefore, King Langdarma is sacrificed together with his secular authority at every cham dance performance. It is only all too understandable why the Fifth Dalai Lama, in whose person the entire worldly power of the Tibetan kings was concentrated for the first time, encouraged the cham dance so much.

Why is the victim and hence the "enemy of the religion" known as the *lingam*? As we know, this Sanskrit word means "phallus". Do the lamas want to put to service the royal procreative powers? The psychoanalyst, Robert A. Paul, offers another interesting interpretation. He sees a "symbolic castration" in the destruction of the *lingam*. Through it the monks demonstrate that the natural reproductive process of birth from a woman represents an abortive human development. But when applied to the royal sacrifice this symbolic castration has a further, power-political significance: it symbolizes the replacement of the dynastic chain of inheritance — which follows the laws of reproduction and presupposes the sexual act — by the incarnation system.

In his fieldwork, Robert A. Paul also observed how on the day following a cham performance the abbot and his monks dressed as dakinis and appeared at the sacrificial site in order to collect up the scattered remains and burn them in a fire together with other objects. Since the "male" lamas conduct this final ritual act in the guise of (female) "sky walkers", it seems likely that yet another tantric female sacrifice is hidden behind the symbolic regicide.

### ***The substitute sacrifice***

The sacrifice of a *lingam* was a particular specialty of the Fifth Dalai Lama, which he had performed not just during the cham dance but also used it, as we shall soon see, for the destruction of enemies. We are dealing with a widely spread practice in Tibetan cultural life. On every conceivable occasion, small pastry figurines (*torma* or *bali*) were created in order to be offered up to the gods or demons. Made from tsampa or butter, they were often shaped into

anthropomorphic figures. One text requires that they be formed like the “breasts of Dakinis” (Beyer, 1978, p. 312). Blood and pieces of meat, resins, poisons, and beer were often added. In the majority of cases substitutes were used for these. Numerous Tibet researchers are agreed that the sacrifice of a tormo involves the symbolic reconstruction of a former human sacrifice (Hermann, Hoffmann, Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Paul, Sierksma, Snellgrove, and Waddell).

Now there are several views about what the offering of a substitute sacrifice signifies. For example, all that is evil, even one’s own bad features, can be projected onto the tormo so as to then be destroyed. Afterwards, the sacrificer feels cleansed and safe from harmful influences. Or the sacrifice may be offered up for the demons to devour, whether to render them favorable or to avert them from harming a particular individual. Here we are dealing with the *bali* ritual codified by the Fifth Dalai Lama. The purpose of the ceremony consists in hampering the dakinis or other malignant spirits from taking a sick or dying person with them into their domain. So that the patient is not tempted by them, a lama depicts the land of the dakinis in a truly terrible light and portrays its female inhabitants as monsters:

They consume warm human flesh as food

They drink warm human blood as a beverage

They lust to kill and work to dismember

There is not a moment in which they cease to battle and fight.

And the addressee is then abjured:

Please do not go to such a country,

stay in the homeland of Tibet!

(Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 463)

With this, the soul of the sick person has indeed been deterred, but the dakinis who wanted to seize him or her have not yet been satisfied. For this reason the texts recommend a substitute sacrifice. The female cannibals are offered a *bali* pyramid consisting of a skull, torn-off strips of skin, butter lamps filled with human fat, and various organs floating in a strong-smelling liquid made from brain, blood and gall. This is supposed to assuage the greed of the “sky walkers” and distract them from the sick person (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 466).

**The Tibetan “scapegoat”**

The anthropologist, James George Frazer, likewise draws a connection between ritual regicide and the symbolic sacrificial rites practiced by many peoples at the beginning of a year. The past year, represented by the old ruler, is sacrificed, and the new year celebrates its entry in the figure of a young king. In the course of time the reigning kings were able to escape this rite, deeply anchored in human history, by setting up substitutes upon whom the ritual violence could be let out. Such sacrificial substitutes for the king were attributed with all kinds of negative features like illnesses, weaknesses, barrenness, poverty, and so on, so that these would no longer be a burden on the community following the violent death of the substitute.

This role of a human “scapegoat” during the Tibetan New Year’s feast (*Monlam*) was taken on by a person who bore the name of the “king of impurity”, “ox demon”, or “savior king”. Half of his face was painted white and the other half black, and he was dressed in new clothes. He then took to the streets of Lhasa, swinging a black yak’s tail as a scepter, to collect offerings and to appropriate things which appealed to him. Many also gave money, but the former owners invested all of these objects with every misfortune with which they might reckon in the future.

This continued for several days. At a pre-arranged time the “ox demon” appeared in front of Lhasa’s cathedral, the Jokhang. There a monk from the Drepung monastery was waiting for him in a magnificent robe. In the scene which was now played out he represented the Dalai Lama. First up there was a violent battle of words in which the scapegoat mocked the Buddhist teachings with a sharp tongue. Thereupon the pretend Dalai Lama challenged him to a game of dice. If the “king of impurity “ were to win, the disastrous consequences for the whole country would have been immense. But preparations had been made to ensure that this did not happen, then he had a die which displayed a one on every face, whilst his opponent always threw a six. After his defeat the loser fled from the town on a white horse. The mob followed him as far as it could, shooting at him with blanks and throwing stones. He was either driven into the wilderness or taken prisoner and locked in one of the horror chambers of the Samye monastery for a time. It was considered a good omen if he died.

Even if he was never deliberately killed, he often paid the highest price for his degrading treatment. Actually his demise was expected, or at least hoped for. It was believed that scapegoats attracted all manner of rare illnesses or died under mysterious circumstances. If the expelled figure nonetheless save his skin, he was permitted to return to Lhasa and once again take on the role.

Behind the “scapegoat ritual” — an event which can be found in ancient cultures all the world — there is the idea of purification. The victim takes on every repulsiveness and all possible besmirchment so as to free the community of these. As a consequence he must become a monster which radiates with the power of darkness. According to tradition, the community has the

right, indeed the duty, to kill or drive off with an aggressive act this monster who is actually nothing more than the repressed shadowy side of his persecutors. The sacrificers are then freed of all evil, which the scapegoat takes to its death with him, and society returns to a state of original purity. Accordingly, the ritual power applied is not a matter of self-interest, but rather a means of attaining the opposite, social peace and an undisturbed state. The scapegoat — René Girard writes — has to “take on the evil power in total so as to transform it via his death into benevolent power, into peace and fruitfulness. ... He is a machine which changes the sterile and contagious power into positive cultural values” (Girard, 1987, pp. 143, 160).



***The scapegoat of Gyantse, adorned with animal intestines***

Yet it is not just an annual psycho-purification of Lamaism which is conducted through the Tibetan Monlam feast, but also the collective cleansing of the historical defilement which bleeds as a deep wound in the subconscious of the monastic state. The driving off or killing of the scapegoat is, just like the cham dance, a ritual of atonement for the murder of King Langdarma. In fact, numerous symbolic references are made to the original deed in the scenario of the festivities. For example,

the “ox demon” (one of the names for the scapegoat) appears colored in black and white and flees on a white horse just like the regicide, Palgyi Dorje. The “ox” was also Langdarma’s totem animal. During the feast, from a mountain where the grave of the apostate king could be found, units of the Tibetan Artillery fired off three cannon, two of which were called the “old and the young demoness”. “Since the Dalai Lamas are actually, in a broad historical sense, beneficiaries of Palgyi Dorje’s [Langdarma’s murderer] crime,” the ethnologist Robert A. Paul writes, “we may suppose that part of the purpose of the annual scapegoat ritual is to allow the guilt for that act to be expressed through the figure of the Ox-demon; and then to reassert the legitimacy of the Dalai Lama’s reign by demonstrating his ability to withstand this challenge to his innocence” (R. Paul, 1982, p. 296).

Authors like James George Frazer and Robert Bleichsteiner are even of the opinion that the “king of impurity” in the final instance represents the Dalai Lama himself, who indeed became the “illegitimate” successor of the killed regent as the worldly ruler of Tibet. “The victim in older times was certainly the king himself,” Bleichsteiner informs us, “who was offered up at the beginning of a new epoch as atonement and guarantee for the well-being of the people. Hence the lamaist priest-kings were also considered to be the atoning sacrifice of the New Year ... “ (Bleichsteiner, 1937, p. 213). It also speaks in favor of this thesis that in early performances of the rite the substitute was required to be of the same age as the god-king and that during the ceremony a doll which represents the Dalai Lama is carried along (Richardson, 1993, p. 64). The evil, dark, despotic, and unfortunate shadow of the hierarch would then be concentrated in the scapegoat, upon whom the populace and the hordes of monks let loose could let out their rage.

Then, once the “Great Fifth” had institutionalized the celebrations, anarchy reigned in Lhasa during the period of the New Year’s festivities: 20,000 monks from the most varied monasteries had *cart blanche*. Everything which was normally forbidden was now permitted. In bawling and wildly gesticulating groups the “holy” men roamed the streets. Some prayed, others cursed, yet others gave vent to wild cries. They pushed each other around, they argued with one another, they hit each other. There were bloody noses, black eyes, battered heads and torn clothes. Meditative absorption and furious rage could each become the other in an instant. Heinrich Harrer, who experienced several feasts at the end of the forties, describes one of them in the following words: “As if awakened from a hypnosis, in this instant the tens of thousands plunge order into chaos. The transition is so sudden that one is stunned. Shouting, wild gesticulation ... they trample one another to the ground, almost murder each other. The praying [monks], still weeping and ecstatically absorbed, become enraged madmen. The monastic soldiers begin their work! Huge blokes with padded shoulders and blackened faces — so that the deterrent effect is further enhanced. They ruthlessly lay into the crowd with their staffs. ... Howling, they take the blows, but even the beaten return again. As if they were possessed by demons” (Harrer, 1984, p. 142).

The Tibetan feast of Monlam is thus a variant upon the paradoxes we have already examined, in which, in accordance with the tantric law of inversion, anarchy and disorder are deliberately

evoked so as to stabilize the Buddhocracy in total. During these days, the bottled- up anti-state aggressions of the subjects can be completely discharged, even if only for a limited time and beneath the blows of the monastic soldiers' clubs.

It was once again the "Great Fifth" who recognized the high state-political value of the scapegoat play and thus made the New Year's festival in the year 1652 into a special state occasion. From the Potala, the "seat of the gods", the incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* could look down smiling and compassionately at the delirium in the streets of Lhasa and at the sad fate of his disgraceful *doppelganger* (the scapegoat).

The scapegoat mechanism can be considered part of the cultural heritage of all humanity. It is astonishingly congruent with the tantric pattern in which the yogi deliberately produces an aggressive, malicious fundamental attitude in order to subsequently transform it into its opposite via the "law of inversion": the poison becomes the antidote, the evil the cure. We have indicated often enough that this does not at all work out to plan, and that rather, after practicing the ritual the "healing priests" themselves can become the demons they ostensibly want to drive out.

Summarizing, we can thus say that, over and above the "tantric female sacrifice", Tibetan Buddhism has made all possible variants of the symbolic sacrifice of humans an essential element of its cultural life. This is also no surprise, then the whole tantric idea is fundamentally based upon the sacrifice of the human (the person, the individual, the human body) to the benefit of the gods or of the yogi. At least in the imaginations of the lamas there are various demons in the Tibetan pantheon who perform the sacrificial rites or to whom the sacrifices are made. The fiends thus fulfill an important task in the tantric scenario and serve the teaching as tutelary deities (*dharmapalas*). As reward for their work they demand still more human blood and still more human flesh. Such cannibal foods are called *kangdza* in Tibetan. They are graphically depicted as dismembered bodies, hearts that have been torn out, and peeled skins in ghastly thangkhas, which are worshipped in sacred chambers dedicated to the demons themselves. *Kangdza* means "wish-fulfilling gifts", unmistakably indicating that people were of the opinion that they could fulfill their greatest wishes through human sacrifices. That this really was understood thus is demonstrated by the constant use of parts of human corpses in Tibetan magic, to which we devote the next chapter.

### **Ritual murder as a current issue among exile Tibetans**

The terrible events of February 4, 1997 in Dharamsala, the Indian seat of government of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, demonstrate that ritual human sacrifice among the Tibetans is in no way a thing of the past but rather continues to take place up until the present day. According to the police report on that day six to eight men burst into the cell of the 70-year-old lama, Lobsang

Gyatso, the leader of the Buddhist dialectic school, and murdered him and two of his pupils with numerous stab wounds. The bloody deed was carried out in the immediate vicinity of the Dalai Lama's residence in a building which forms part of the Namgyal monastery. The Namgyal Institute is, as we have already mentioned on a number of occasions, responsible for the ritual performance of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. The world press — in as far as it reported the crime at all — was horrified by the extreme cruelty of the murderers. The victims' throats had been slit and according to some press reports their skin had been partially torn from their bodies (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1997, No. 158, p. 10). There is even a rumor among the exile Tibetan community that the perpetrators had sucked out the victims' blood in order to use it for magical purposes. All this took place in just under an hour.

The Indian criminal police and the western media were united in the view that this was a matter of a ritual murder, since money and valuable objects, such as a golden Buddha which was to be found there for example, were left untouched by the murderers. The “mouthpiece” for the Dalai Lama in the USA, Robert Thurman, also saw the murder as a ritual act: “The three were stabbed repeatedly and cut up in a way that was like exorcism.” (*Newsweek*, May 5, 1997, p. 43).

In general the deed is suspected to have been an act of revenge by followers of the protective deity, *Dorje Shugden*, of whom Lobsang Gyatso was an open opponent. But to date the police have been unable to produce any real evidence. In contrast, the *Shugden* followers see the murders as an attempt to marginalize them as criminals by the Dalai Lama. (We shall discuss this in the next chapter.)

As important as it may be that the case be solved, it is not of decisive significance for our analysis who finally turns out to have committed the deed. We are under any circumstances confronted with an event here, in which the tantric scheme has become shockingly real and current. The ritual murders of 4 February have put a final end to the years of “scientific” discussion around the question of whether the calls to murder in the tantras (which we have considered in detail in the first part of this study) are only a symbolic directive or whether they are to be understood literally. Both are the case. On this occasion, this has even been perceived in the western press, such as, for example, when the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* asks: “Exorcist ritual murders? Fanatics even in the most gentle of all religions? For many fans of Buddhism in the West their happy world falls a part.” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1997, No. 158, p. 10). It nonetheless remains unclear which metaphysical speculations were involved in the bloody rite of February 4.

### **The ritual sacrifice of Tibet**

In dealing with the occupation of Tibet by the Chinese, the otherwise most “mystical” lamas prefer to argue in exclusively western and non-mythological terms. There is talk of breaches of human

rights, international law, and “cultural genocide”. If, however, we consider the subjugation of the Land of Snows and the exodus of the Dalai Lama from a symbolic/tantric viewpoint, then we reach completely different conclusions.

Primarily, as we have extensively demonstrated, a politically oriented tantra master (especially if he practices the *Kalachakra Tantra* as does the Dalai Lama) is not at all interested in strengthening and maintaining an established and orderly state. Such a conservative position is valid only for as long as it does not stand in the way of the final goal, the conquest of the world by a Buddhocracy. This imperial path to world control is paved with sacrifices: the sacrifice of the *karma mudra* (the wisdom consort), the sacrifice of the pupil’s individual personality, the symbolic sacrifice of worldly kingship, etc.

Just as the guru is able to evoke mental states in his *sadhaka* (pupil) which lead to the fragmentation of the latter’s psyche so that he can be reborn on a *higher* spiritual plane, so too he applies such deliberately initiated practices of dismemberment to the state and society as well, in order for these to re-emerge on a *higher* level. Just as the tantra master dissolves the structures of his human body, he can likewise bring down the established structures of a social community. Then the Buddhist/tantric idea of the state has an essentially symbolic nature and is fundamentally no different to the procedures which the yogi performs within his energy body and through his ritual practices.

From the viewpoint of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, all the important events in Tibetan history point eschatologically to the control of the universe by a *Chakravartin* (world ruler). The precondition for this is the destruction of the old social order and the construction of a new society along the guidelines laid down in the Dharma (the teaching). Following such a logic, and in accordance with the tantric “law of inversion”, the destruction of a national Tibet could become the requirement for a *higher* transnational Buddhocratic order.

Have — we must now ask ourselves — the Tibetan people been sacrificed so that their life energies may be freed for the worldwide spread of Lamaism? As fantastic and cynical as such a mythical interpretation of history may sound, it is surreptitiously widely distributed in the occult circles of Tantric Buddhism. Proud reference is made to the comparison with Christianity here: just as Jesus Christ was sacrificed to save the world, so too the Tibet of old was destroyed so that the Dharma could spread around the globe.

In an insider document which was sent to the Tibetologist Donald S. Lopez, Jr. in 1993, it says of the Chinese destruction of Tibetan culture: “From an esoteric viewpoint, Tibet has passed through

the burning ground of purification on a national level. What is the 'burning ground'? When a developing entity, be it a person or a nation (the dynamic is the same), reaches a certain level of spiritual development, a time comes for the lower habits, old patterns, illusions and crystallized beliefs to be purified so as to better allow the spiritual energies of inner being to flow through the instrument without distortion ..... After such a purification the entity is ready for the next level of expansion in service. The Tibetans were spiritually strong enough to endure this burning ground so as to pave the way for its defined part in building the new world". In this latter, the authors assure us, the "first Sacred Nation" will become a "point of synthesis" of "universal love, wisdom and goodwill" (quoted by Lopez, 1998, p. 204).

Or was the exodus of the omnipotent I and the killing of many Tibetan believers by the Chinese even "planned" by the Buddhist side, so that Tantrism could conquer the world? The Tibetologist Robert Thurman (the "mouthpiece of the Dalai Lama" in America) discusses such a theory in his book *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*. "The most compelling, if somewhat dramatic [theory]," Thurman writes, "is that Vajrapani (the Bodhisattva of power) emanated himself as Mao Tse-tung and took upon himself the heinous sin of destroying the Buddha Dharma's institutions [of Tibet], along with many beings, for three main reasons: to prevent other, ordinarily human, materialists from reaping the consequences of such terrible acts; to challenge the Tibetan Buddhists to let go the trapping of their religion and philosophy and force themselves to achieve the ability to embody once again in this terrible era their teachings of detachment, compassion, and wisdom, and to scatter the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist teachers and disseminate their teachings throughout the planet among all the people, whether religious or secular, at this apocalyptic time when humanity must make a quantum leap from violence to peacefulness in order to preserve all life on earth" (quoted in Lopez, 1998, p. 274).

Such visions of purification and sacrifice may sound bizarre and fantastic to a western historian, but we must nevertheless regard them as the expression of an ancient culture which recognizes the will and the plan of a supreme being behind every historical suffering and every human catastrophe. The catastrophe of Tibet is foreseen in the script of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Thus for the current Dalai Lama his primary concern is not the freedom of the nation of Tibet, but rather the spread of Tantric Buddhism on a global scale. "My main concern, my main interest, is the Tibetan Buddhist culture, not just political independence", he said at the end of the eighties year in Strasbourg (*Shambhala Sun*, Archive, November 1996).

How deeply interconnected politics and ritual are felt to be by the *Kundun's* followers is shown by the vision described by a participant at a conference in Bonn ("Mythos Tibet") who had traveled in Tibet: he had suddenly seen the highlands as a great mandala. Exactly like the sand mandala in the *Kalachakra Tantra* it was then destroyed so that the whole power of Tibet could be concentrated in the person of the Dalai Lama as the world teacher of the age to come.

As cynical as it may sound, through such imaginings the suffering the Tibetans have experienced under Chinese control attain a deeper significance and spiritual solemnity. It was the greatest gift for the distribution of Tibetan Buddhism in the West. [1]

The spectacular self-sacrifice has since the spring of 1998 become a new political weapon for both the Tibetans who remained and those in exile: in 1997, the majority of monks from the Tibetan Drepung monastery were convinced that the Dalai Lama would soon return with the support of the US in order to free Tibet. Thus, now would be the right moment to sacrifice oneself for His Holiness, for the religion, and for Tibet (Goldstein, 1998, p. 42). To bring the situation in their home country to the world's attention and above all to raise the question of Tibet in the UN, Tibetan monks protested in India with a so-called "hunger strike to the death". When the Indian police admitted the protesters to hospital after a number of days, the 50-year-old monk, Thubten Ngodub, publicly self-immolated, with the cry of "Long live the Dalai Lama!" on his lips. [2] He was declared a martyr of the nation and his funeral in Dharamsala was a moving demonstration which went on for hours. Youths wrote *Free Tibet* on their chests in their own blood. In a public communiqué from the youth organization (TYC) it was said that "The Tibetan people have sent a clear message to the world that they can sacrifice themselves for the cause of an independent Tibet ... More blood will flow in the coming days" (AFP, New Delhi, April 29, 1998). The names of many more Tibetans who were prepared to die for their country were placed on a list.

On the one hand, the Dalai Lama condemned such proceedings because they were a resort to violent means (suicide is violence directed against the self), on the other hand he expressed that he admired the motivation and resolve of these Tibetans (who sacrifice themselves) (*The Office of Tibet*, April 28, 1998). He visited the hunger strikers and blessed the national martyr, Ngodub, in a special ritual. The grotesque aspect of the situation was that, at the same time and under American pressure, the *Kundun* was preparing for an imminent encounter with the Chinese. Whilst he repeatedly stresses in public that he renounced an "independent Tibet", his subjects sacrifice themselves for exactly this demand. We shall come to speak later of the discordance which arises between Lamaism and the national question.

### **Real violence and one's own imaginings**

Is perhaps the violence which the Land of Snows has had to experience under Chinese occupation a mirror image of its own culture? If we look at the scenes of unbounded suffering and merciless sadism which are depicted upon countless thangkas, then we have before our eyes an exact visual prognosis of what was done to the Tibetans by the Chinese. In just casting a glance at in the Tibetan Book of the Dead one is at once confronted with the same infernal images as are described by Tibetan refugees. The history of horrors is — as we know — codified in both the sacred iconography of Tantric Buddhism and in the unfolding scenes of the tantras.

In light of the history of Tibet, must Lamaism's images of horror just be seen as a prophecy of events to come, or did they themselves contribute to the production of the brutal reality? Does the deed follow the meditative envisioning, like thunder follows lightning? Is the Tibetan history of suffering aligned with a tantric myth? Were the Buddhist doctrine of insight applied consistently, it would have to answer this question with "yes". Joseph Campbell, too, is one of the few western authors to describe the Chinese attacks, which he otherwise strongly criticizes, as a "vision of the whole thing come true, the materialization of the mythology in life" and to have referred to the depiction of the horrors in the tantras (Joseph Campbell, 1973, p. 516).

If one spins this mythological net out further, then the following question at once presents itself: Why were Tibet and the "omnipotent" lamas not protected by their deities? Were the wrathful *dharmapalas* (tutelary deities) too weak to repel the "nine-headed" Chinese dragon and drive it from the "roof of the world"? Perhaps the goddess *Palden Lhamo*, the female protective spirit of the Dalai Lama and the city of Lhasa, had freed herself from the clutches of the andocentric clergy and turned against her former masters? Had the enchained *Srinmo*, the mother of Tibet, joined up with the demons from the Middle Kingdom in order to avenge herself upon the lamas for nailing her down? Or was the exodus of the omnipotent lamas intentional, in order to now conquer the world?

Such questions may also appear bizarre and fantastic to a western historian; but for the Tibetan/tantric "discipline of history", which suspects superhuman forces are at work behind politics, they do make sense. In the following chapter we would like to demonstrate how decisively such an atavistic view influences the politics of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama through a consideration of the Tibetan oracle system and the associated *Shugden* affair.

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### Footnotes:

[1] On the other hand, the "sacrificing" of Tibet is lamented on all sides or even linked to the fate of all humanity: "If one allows such a spiritual society to be destroyed," writes the director Martin Scorsese, "we lose a part of our own soul" (*Focus*, 46/1997, p. 168).

[2] There is a passage in the *Lotus Sutra* in which a Bodhisattva burns himself up as a sacrifice for a Buddha.

## 7. THE WAR OF THE ORACLE GODS AND THE SHUGDEN AFFAIR

The Tibetans can be described without exaggeration as being “addicted to oracles”. The most varied methods of augury and clairvoyance have been an everyday presence in the Land of Snows since time immemorial. The following types of oracle, all of which are still employed (among the Tibetans in exile as well), are described on an Internet site: doughball divination, dice divination, divination on a rosary, bootstrap divination, the interpretation of “incidental” signs, clairvoyant dreams, examining flames, observing a butter lamp, mirror divination, shoulder-blade divination, and hearing divination (HPI 10). When the “Great Fifth” seized worldly power in Tibet in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, he founded the institution of a state oracle so as to be able to obtain divinatory advice about the business of government. This is a matter of a human medium who serves as the mouthpiece of a particular deity. Still today, this form of “supernatural” consultation forms an important division within the Tibetan government in exile. The opinions of oracles are obtained for all important political events, often by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in person. He is — in the accusations of his opponents — all but obsessed by divinations; it is primarily the prophecies of the state oracle which are mentioned. But before we examine this accusation, we should take a closer look at the history and character of this “state oracle”.

### The Tibetan state oracle

In the Tibet of old, the state oracle (or rather its human medium) lived, as one of the highest ranking lamas in the Nechung residence. “It” had at its command a considerable “court” and celebrated its liturgies in a temple of its own. The predominant color of the interior temple was black. On the walls of the gloomy shrine hung mysterious weapons, from which great magical effects were supposed to emanate. In the corners lurked stuffed birds, tigers, and leopards. Pictures of terror gods looked back at the visitor, who suddenly stood in front of a mask of dried leather feared across the whole country. Among the chief iconographic motifs of the temple was the depiction of human ribcages.

At the beginning of an oracle session, the Nechung Lama is sent into a trance via all manner of ritual song and incense. After a while eyes close, his facial muscles begin to twitch, his brow becomes dark red and glistens with sweat. The prophet god then visibly enters him, then during his trance the medium develops — and this is confirmed by photographs and western eyewitness reports — almost superhuman powers. He can bend iron swords and, although he carries a metal crown weighing over 80 pounds (!) on his head, perform a wild dance. Incomprehensible sounds come from his foaming lips. This is supposed to be a sacred language. Only once it has been deciphered by the priests can the content of the oracle message be recognized.

The deity conjured up by the Nechung Lama is called *Pehar* or *Pedkar*. However often only his adjutant is invoked, *Dorje Drakden* by name. This is because a direct appearance by *Pehar* can be so violent that it threatens the life of his medium (the Nechung Lama). *Pehar* has under his command a group of five wrathful gods, who together are called the “protective wheel”. It seems sensible to make a few thoughts about this prophesying god, who has for centuries exercised such a decisive influence upon Tibetan politics and still continues to do so.

In iconographic representations, *Pehar* has three faces of different colors. He wears a bamboo hat which is crowned with a *vajra* upon his head. In his hands he holds a bow and arrow, a sword, a cleaver, and a club. His mount is a snow lion.

*Pehar's* original home lay in the north of Tibet, there where in the conception of the old Tibetans (in the *Gesar* epic) the “devil's country” was to be found. In earlier times he reigned as war god of the Hor Mongols. According to the sagas, this wild tribe was counted among the bitterest opponents of the pre-Buddhist Tibetans and their national hero, *Gesar of Ling*.

Old documents from Tunhuang describe the Hor as “flesh-eating red demons” (Stein, 1993, p. 36). Their martial king had laid waste to the Land of Snows and stolen its queen, the wife of *Gesar of Ling*. After terrible battles the Tibetan national hero defeated the rapacious Horses, to whom we are indebted for the word *horde*, and won their commitment and that of their chief god, *Pehar*, with an eternal oath of loyalty. Over the centuries the term *Hor* was then used to refer to various Mongolian tribes, including those of Genghis Khan. Hence, *Pehar* (the principal oracle god of the Dalai Lama) was originally a bitter arch-enemy of the Tibetans.

Where *Gesar* had rendered the Mongol god harmless, it was the *Maha Siddha* Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) who brought Buddhism to Tibet who first succeeded in actually putting *Pehar* to work. The saga tells how Guru Rinpoche pressed a *vajra* upon the barbaric god's head and thus magically mastered him. After this act, *Pehar* was able to be incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon as a servant. For seven hundred years his chief residence was the founding monastery Samye, by the construction of which he had to assist as a “forced laborer”. About 900 years later the “Great Fifth” transported him (i.e., his symbol) to Nechung in the vicinity of the Drepung monastery and advanced the former war god of the Hor to state oracle. Since, after his “Buddhization”, he did not want to be reminded of his former defeat (by the national hero, *Gesar*), not a single verse from the *Gesar* epic was allowed to be cited in the Drepung monastery or at any other location where he had stayed.

The question soon arises as to why of all gods *Pehar*, the former ferocious and cruel opponent of the Land of Snows, was given the delicate office of being a supernatural governmental advisor to the Tibetan “god-king”. Surely this would have sooner been the entitlement of a Bodhisattva like *Avalokiteshvara* or a national hero like *Gesar of Ling*.

With this question too, the key is to be sought in the “political theology” of the “Great Fifth”. We may recall that both the conferring of the title of *Dalai Lama* and the establishment of the hierarch’s secular power were the actions of the Mongolians and not of the Tibetan people. In contrast, as we have reported, in the 17th century the national forces of the country were actually gathered under the kings of Tsang and around the throne of the Karmapa (the leader of the “red” Kagyupa sect). Thus, it does not take much fantasy to be able to sketch out why *Pehar* was chosen as the advisor of the “yellow” Buddhist state (then represented by the Fifth Dalai Lama). It was expected of the former Mongolian god and opponent of Tibet that he tame the recalcitrant Tibetans (who supported the Karmapa). In this his interests were in complete accord with those of the “god-king”. Additionally, the “Great Fifth” himself was a descendant of an aristocratic family which traced its lineage back to the Hor Mongols. *Pehar*, the later state oracle, is thus a foreign deity imposed upon the Tibetan people.

It is true that the oracle god has sworn an oath of loyalty, but it is — in the lamas’ opinion — by no means ruled out that he may one day break this and unleash his full vengeance upon the Tibetans who defeated him in times gone by. He has in his own words explained to Padmasambhava what will then happen. He will destroy the houses and the fields. The children of the Land of Snows will have to endure famine and will be driven insane. The fruit of the and will be destroyed by hail and swarms of insects. The strong will be carried off and only the weak shall survive. Wars shall devastate the roof of the world. *Pehar* himself will interrupt the meditations of the lamas, rob their spells of their magic power, and force them to commit suicide. Brothers will rape their sisters. He will make the wisdom consorts (the *mudras*) of the tantra masters bad and heretical, yes, transform them into enemies of the teaching who emigrate to the lands of the unbelievers. But first he shall copulate with them. “I,” *Pehar* proclaims, “the lord of the temples, the stupas and scriptures, I shall possess the fair bodies of all virgins” (Sierksma, 1966, p. 165).

In the sphere of practical politics the recommendations of the Mongolian martial god have also not always been advantageous for the Tibetans. For example, he gave the Thirteenth Dalai Lama the catastrophic advice that he should attack the British army under Colonel Younghusband which led to a massacre of the Tibetan soldiers.

### *Current politics and the oracle system*

One would think that the Tibetans in exile would these days have distanced themselves from such a warlike deity as *Pehar*, who constantly threatens them with bloody acts of revenge, especially after their experiences at the hands of the Chinese occupying forces. One would further assume that, given the *Kundun*’s strident professions of democracy, the oracle system as such would be in decline or have even been abandoned. But the opposite is the case: in Dharamsala the divinatory arts, astrology, the interpretation of dreams, and even the drawing of lots still have a most decisive (!) influence upon the politics of the Tibetans in exile. Every (!) politically significant step is first taken once the mediums, soothsayers, and court astrologers have been consulted,

every important state-political activity requires the invocation of the wrathful Mongolian god, *Pehar*. This tendency has increased in recent years. Today there are said to be three further mediums (who represent different deities) whose services are made use of. Among these is a young and attractive girl from an eastern province of Tibet. Some members of the community of Tibetans in exile are therefore of the opinion that the various oracles misuse His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama for their own ends and force their will upon him.

Now, how does the “god-king” see this through his own eyes? “Even some Tibetans,” we learn from the *Kundun*, “mostly those who consider themselves 'progressive', have misgivings about my continued use of this ancient method of intelligence gathering. But I do so for the simple reason that as I look back over the many occasions when I have asked questions of the oracle, on each one of them time has proved that his answer was correct” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993 I, p. 312). “I not only believe in spirits, but in various kinds of spirits!”, His Holiness further admits, “... To this category belongs the state oracle Nechung (*Pehar*). We consider these spirits reliable, then they have a long history without any controversy in over 1000 years” (*Tagesanzeiger* (Switzerland), March 23, 1998). *Pehar* determined the point in time in which the Dalai Lama had to flee Tibet and with the statement “that the shine of the 'wish-fulfilling jewel' [one of the Dalai Lama’s names] will light up in the West” predicted the spread of Buddhism in Europe and North America. (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 154).

Even the aggression of his oracle god is not denied by the *Kundun*: “His [task], in his capacity as protector and defender, is wrathful. [!] However, although our functions are similar, my relationship with Nechung is that of commander to lieutenant: I never bow down to him. It is for Nechung to bow to the Dalai Lama” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993 I, p. 312). This statement confirms once again that from a tantric viewpoint, the politics of the Tibetans in exile is not conducted by people, but by gods. As *Avalokiteshvara* and the *Kalachakra* deity, the Dalai Lama commands the Mongolian god, *Pehar*, to make predictions about the future. [1] The *Kundun*’s comment in this quotation that his functions and the “functions” of *Pehar* are “similar” is ambiguous. Does he want to allude to his own “wrathful aspect” here? On September 4, 1987 a new Nechung medium was enthroned in Dharamsala, since the old one had died three years before. His official confirmation was attained following a demonstrative trance session at which the *Kundun*, cabinet members of the Tibetan government in exile and the parliamentary chairman were present. About two months later another séance was held before the Council of Ministers and a number of high lamas. This illustrious assembly of the highest ranking representatives of the Tibetan people shows how the political prophecies and instructions of the god *Pehar* are taken seriously not just by the Dalai Lama but also by the “people’s representatives” of the Tibetans in exile. Thus, in political decisions neither reason nor the majority of votes, nor even public opinion have the last word, but rather the Mongolian oracle god.

### **Dorje Shugden—a threat to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama’s life?**

Since 1996 at the latest, *Pehar* and his Nechung medium have met with embittered competition from among the Tibetan’s own ranks. This is a matter of the tutelary and divinatory deity, *Dorje Shugden*. In pictures, *Dorje Shugden* is depicted riding grim-faced through a lake of boiling blood

upon a snow lion. It is primarily conservative circles among the Gelugpas (the “Yellow Hats”) who have grouped around this figure. They demand the exclusive supremacy of the yellow sect (the *Gelugpas*) over the other Buddhist schools.

This traditional political position of the *Shugden* worshippers is not acceptable to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (although he himself is a member of the yellow sect) because he is working towards an integration of all Tibet’s religious orientations, including the Bonpos. With the same resolve as the “Great Fifth” he sees a one-off chance to multiply the power of his own institution in a collective movement involving all schools. It is therefore not surprising that even the early history of *Dorje Shugden* features an irreconcilable confrontation between the protective god and the Fifth Dalai Lama, which appears to be repeating itself today.

What took place on that occasion, and what has been the history of the recalcitrant *Shugden*? The “pan-Buddhist” program of the “Great Fifth”, but especially his occult tendency towards the Nyingmapa sect, led the abbot of the powerful Drepung (Yellow Hat) monastery, Drakpa Gyaltzen, to organize a rebellion against the ruler in the Potala. The conspiracy was discovered and was not carried out.



***The two oracle gods at daggers drawn: Shugden [l] and Nechung [r]***

Most probably at the command of the in such matters unscrupulous god-king, the rebel was murdered first. Whilst the corpse was being burned on a pyre, a threatening cloud which resembled a huge black hand, the hand of the avenger, was formed by the ascending smoke. After his death the murdered lama, Drakpa Gyaltzen, transformed into a martial spirit and took on the fearsome name of *Dorje Shugden*, which means the “Bellow of the Thunderbolt”. He continued to pursue his political goals from the beyond.

Shortly after his death — the legend reports — all manner of unhappy incidents befell the country. Towns and villages were afflicted with sicknesses. The Tibetan government constantly made wrong decisions, even the Fifth Dalai Lama was not spared. Every time he wanted to have a meal in the middle of the day, his victim (*Dorje Shugden*) manifested himself as an invisible evil force, up-ended the dinner tables and damaged the “ His Holiness’s possessions”. [2] Ultimately it proved possible to subdue the vengeful spirit through all manner of rituals, but he did not therefore remain inactive.

With the assistance of a human medium, through whom he still today communicates with his priests, the abbot who had transformed into a protective god organized (from the beyond, so to speak) a oppositional grouping within the Yellow Hat (Gelugpa) order, who wanted (and still want) to enforce the absolute supremacy of their order by magical and practical political means. For example, at the beginning of the 20th century the invocation of *Shugden* by the powerful Yellow Hat lama, Pabongka Rinpoche, was used to suppress the Nyingmapas and Kagyupas in eastern Tibet. An outright ritual war was fought out: "... whenever this [*Shugden*] ritual was practiced in the Gelugpa monasteries, the surrounding monasteries of the other schools [performed] certain practices so as to check the negative forces again" (*Kagyü Life* 21-1996, p. 34).

Nonetheless the "reactionary" *Shugden* movement constantly gained in popularity, especially among members of the Tibetan nobility too. Later, this "sub-sect" of the Yellow Hats came to understand itself as a secret nest of resistance against the Chinese occupation force, since the traditional protectors of Tibet (*Palden Lhamo* or *Pehar*, for example) had allegedly betrayed and left the country. One of the chief representatives of the secret conservative alliance (Trijang Rinpoche) was a teacher of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who himself initiated his divine pupil into the *Shugden* cult.

The reverence for *Shugden* is likewise high among the Tibetans in exile, and is well distributed worldwide (everywhere where Gelugpas are to be found). A fifth, in some other versions even two-thirds, of the yellow sect are said to pray to the reactionary *dharmapala* (tutelary spirit). But in the meantime the movement has also spread among Westerners. These are primarily from the *New Kadampa Tradition* (NKT), an English-based grouping around the lama Geshe Kelsang Gyatso. The declaration of exclusion from his former monastery says of the latter that, "this demon with broken commitments, Kelsang Gyatso, burns with the flame of unbearable spite toward the unsurpassed omniscient XIV Dalai Lama, the only staff of life of religious people in Tibet, whose activities and kindness equal the sky" (Lopez, 1998, p. 195). His supporters provide online information about their conflict with Dharamsala under the name of the *Shugden Supporters Community* (SSC).

### ***The Kundun and Shugden***

It is true that in the year 1976 the Fourteenth Dalai Lama had already declared that he did not wish for his person to associated in any way with *Dorje Shugden*, especially because the worship of this "reactionary" spirit had come into conflict with three other *dharmapalas* (tutelary gods) which he revered highly, the oracle god *Pehar*, the terrible *Palden Lhamo*, and the protective god *Dharmaraja*. Rumors report of a dream of the *Kundun* in which *Shugden* and *Pehar* had fought with one another. On a number of occasions *Pehar* prophesied via the Nechung Lama that *Shugden* was attempting to undermine the sovereignty of the *Kundun* and thus deliver Tibet into the hands of the Chinese. The Mongolian god received unexpected support in his accusations through a young attractive female medium by name of Tsering Chenma, who, during the preparations for a *Kalachakra initiation* (!) in Lahaul Spiti announced that 30 members of the *Dorje Shugden Society* would attack the Dalai Lama in the course of the initiation. Thereupon the

*Kundun's* security staff searched all present for weapons. Nothing was found and not a single representative of the *Shugden* society was in attendance (Burns, Newsgroup 1).

Yet another, female (!) oracle was questioned about the Shugden affair. During the session and in the presence of the Dalai Lama, the woman is supposed to have fallen upon a monk and whilst she tore at his clothes and shook his head cried out: "This Lama is bad, he is following *Dorje Shugden*, take him out, take him out" (Burns, Newsgroup 9).

The majority of the Tibetans in exile were naturally not informed about such incidents, which were more or less played out behind closed doors, and were thus most surprised at the sharpness and lack of compromise with which the *Kundun* repeated his criticisms of the *Shugden* movement in 1996.

On March 21, during the initiation into a particular tantra (*Hayagriva*) he turned to those present with the following words: "I have recently said several prayers for the well-being of our nation and religion. It has become fairly clear that *Dolgyal* [another name for *Shugden*] is a spirit of the dark forces. ... If any of you intend to continue to invoke *Dolgyal* [*Shugden*], it would be better for you to stay away from this authorization, to stand up and leave this place. It is unfitting if you continue to sit here. It will be of no use to you. It will in contrast have the effect of shortening the life of the Gyalwa Rinpoche [of the Dalai Lama, that is, his own life]. Which is not good. If there are, however, some among you who want that Gyalwa Rinpoche [he himself] should soon die, then just stay" (*Kagyü Life* 21-1996, p. 35).

At another location the *Kundun* announced his fear that *Shugden* was seeking to spoil all his pleasure in life via psychic terror: "You should not think that dangers for my life come only from someone armed with a knife, a gun or a bomb. Such an event is extremely unlikely. But dangers to my life may arise if my advice is constantly spurned, causing me to feel discouraged and to see no further purpose in life" (Kashag, HPI 11).

Such statements by His Holiness may imply that the Dalai Lama (and behind him the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara*) is very fearful of this vengeful spirit, which induced the Indian *Associated Press* to make the mocking comment that, "a 350-year old ghost is haunting the Dalai Lama" (Associated Press, August 21, 1997, 2:54 a.m.). At any rate,, the god-king's security service which protects his residence in Dharamsala in the meantime consists of 100 police officers.

The following statement by the *Kundun* has been leaked from a secret meeting of influential exiled Tibetan politicians and high lamas which the Dalai Lama called to discuss the *Shugden* case in

Caux (Switzerland): “Everyone who is affiliated with the Tibetan Society of Ganden Phodrang government (Tibetan Government) should relinquish ties with Dhogyal (Shugden). This is necessary since it poses danger to the religious and temporal situation in Tibet. As for foreigners, it makes no difference to us if they walk with their feet up and their head down. We have taught Dharma to them, not they to us. ... We should do it [carry out this ban] in such a way to ensure that in future generations not even the name of Dholgyal [*Shugden*] is remembered” (Burns, Newsgroup 1).

Numerous Tibetans who had in the past been initiated into the *Shugden* cult by the personal teacher of the *Kundun*, Trijang Rinpoche, and believed that through this they enjoyed His Holiness’s favor, saw themselves all at once betrayed after the ban and felt deeply disappointed. For the sophisticated Dalai Lama, however, the sectarian position of the “yellow fundamentalists” and “sectarians” was no longer bearable and quite obviously a significant obstacle on his mission to compel all sects to accept his absolute control and thus limit the supremacy of the Gelugpas. “This *Shugden* spirit”, the *Kundun* has said, “has for over 360 years created tensions between the Gelug tradition and the other schools. ... Some may [because of the ban] have lost trust in me. But at the same time numerous followers of the Kagyupa or Nyingma schools have recognized that the Dalai Lama is pursuing a truly non-sectarian course. I believe this *Shugden* worship has been like an agonizing boil for 360 years. Now like a modern surgeon I have undertaken a small operation” (*Tagesanzeiger* (Switzerland), March 23, 1998).

He then also branded the *Shugden* cult as “idolatry” and as a “relapse into shamanism” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1997, No. 158, p. 10). On March 30, 1996 the ban on the worship of Shugden was pronounced by governmental decree. The “mouthpiece” of the *Kundun* in the USA, Robert Thurman, emotionally denounced the “sectarians” and publicly disparaged them as the “Taliban of Buddhism”.

In the meantime the accusations coming out of Dharamsala against the *Shugden* worshippers fill many pages: they were cooperating with the Chinese and received funding from Beijing; they were fouling their own nest; they were playing “Russian roulette”, because they dragged the whole exile Tibetan case (and thereby themselves) into the depths. They were trying to kill the *Kundun*.

### ***The accusations made by the Shugden worshippers***

On the other hand, the *Shugden* followers, whose leader has meanwhile been officially declared to be an “enemy of the people”, speak of a true witch hunt directed against them which has already been in progress for a number of months. They accuse the Dalai Lama of a flagrant breach of human rights and the right to freedom of religion and do not shy from drawing comparisons with the Chinese occupation force and the Catholic Inquisition. Houses belonging to the sect are said to have been illegally searched by followers of the *Kundun*, masked bands of thugs to have attacked defenseless *Shugden* believers, images of and altars to the protective god to have been deliberately burned and thrown into rivers. Lists of the names of *Dorje Shugden* practitioners

("enemies of the people") are said to have been drawn up and pictures of them and their children to have been hung out in public buildings so as to defame them. It is said that followers of the protective deity have been completely refused entry to the offices of the government in exile and that the children of their families no longer have access to the official schools. Following a resolution of the so-called *Tibetan Cholsum Convention* (held between August 27 and 31, 1998) Shugden followers were unable to travel internationally or draw pensions, state child assistance, or social security payments. In it, Tibetans are forbidden to read the writings of the cult and they were called upon to burn them.

A militant underground organization with the name of the "secret society for the destruction of internal and external enemies of Tibet" threatened to murder two young lineage holders, the lamas Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche (13-years-old) [3] and Song Rinpoche (11-years-old), who (under the influence of their teacher) performed rites in honor of *Dorje Shugden*: "... we will destroy your life and your activities" (Swiss Television, SF1, January 6, 1998). In a document from this group tabled by Shugden followers, it says: "Anyone who goes against the policy of the government must be singled out one-pointedly, opposed and given the death penalty. ... As for the reincarnations of Trijang and Song Rinpoche, if they do not stop practicing Dhogyal [*Shugden*] and contradict with the word of H.H. the Dalai Lama, not only will we not be able to respect them, but their life and their activities will suffer destruction. This is our first warning" (Burns, Newsgroup 1). Whilst a Western television crew were filming, a Tibetan monk who cooperated with the reporters received a death threat: "... in seven days you will be dead!" (Swiss Television, SF1, January 6, 1998).

In addition Dharamsala has exerted vehement psychological pressure on Buddhist centers in the West and forbidden them from performing *Shugden* rituals. In a word — the worshippers of the protective god had become the "Jews of Buddhism" (*Newsweek*, April 28, 1997, p. 26).

In London, where the sect has around 3000 members, there were protest demonstrations at which pictures of the *Kundun* were held high with the slogan, "*Your Smiles Charm, Your Actions Harm*". He was referred to here as a "merciless dictator, who oppresses his people more than the Chinese do" (*Kagyü Life* 21, 1996, p. 34).

However, in an official communiqué from May 14, 1996, the government in exile denied all accusations. In contrast — they announced that death threats had been sent from *Shugden* to the offices of His Holiness and the *Tibetan Women's Association*. "If there comes division among prominent persons in the Yellow Hat Sect, there will be bloodshed in the monasteries and settlements across India", one of the threatening letters is said to have stated (*Newsweek*, April 28, 1997, p. 26; retranslation). Both sides clearly fear that their lives are threatened by the other side.

All these mutual fears, accusations, and slander in the battle between the two oracle gods reached their climax in the ritual murder of the lama Lobsang Gyatso on February 4, 1997 which we have described above. Lobsang Gyatso was considered a special friend of the Dalai Lama and a pronounced opponent of the *Shugden* sect. A few days after the murder a press release from the government in exile coursed around the world in which *Dorje Shugden* followers were said to certainly be responsible for the murder. There was talk of confessions and arrests. This opinion remains current among a broad public to this day.

As evidence, among other things a letter to the murder victim (Lobsang Gyatso) was cited in which (it was said) the secretary of the *Dorje Shugden Society* had threatened the abbot with murder. Tashi Wangdu, a minister of the Tibetan government in exile, held this document, written in Tibetan, in his hand and showed it again on January 25, 1998 in Swiss Television (on the “Sternstunde”[Star Hour] program). However, this turned out to be a deliberate and very blatant attempt to mislead, then the Tibetan document, which was later translated, does not contain a single word of a murder threat. Rather, it contains a polite invitation to Lobsang Gyatso to discuss “theological” questions with the *Dorje Shugden Society* in Delhi (Gassner, 1999).

But this document was enough to arrest all known followers of the protective god (*Shugden*) in Delhi and illegally imprison them. However, they denied participating in the crime in any form whatsoever. [4] Indeed, despite interrogations lasting weeks by the Indian criminal police, nothing has been proven. The evidence is so meager that it is most likely that the crime was committed by another party. The matter was also seen so by a court in Dharamsala, which negated any connection between the *Dorje Shugden Society* and the murders of February 4.

For this reason, there are claims from the *Shugden* followers that the Dalai Lama’s circle tried to pin the blame on them in order to muzzle and marginalize them. In light of the power-political ambitions and relative strength of the sect — it is said to have over 20,000 active members in India alone — this version also makes sense. Some western worshippers of the protective god even go so far as to claim that a higher order from the *Kundun* lay behind the deed. Until the murderers are convicted, a good criminologist must keep his or her eye on all of these possibilities.

### ***Reactions of the Tibetan parliament***

Within the Tibetan parliament in exile, the incidents have led to great nervousness and high tension. A resolution was passed demanding that “in essence government departments, organizations, associations, monasteries and their branches under the direction of the exile Tibetan government should abide by the ban against worship of Dhogyal” (Burns, Newsgroup 1).

In the further reactions of the people’s representatives one can read just how risky the whole matter is seen to be. Hence, during the parliamentary session of September 20, 1997 one of the

members established that “an unprecedented amount of literature is being published everywhere that criticizes the Dalai Lama and belittles the Tibetan Exile Government” (Burns, Newsgroup 1). This is “extremely dangerous” and in the principal monasteries there was open talk of a schism. During the parliamentary session the government was strongly criticized for not having done anything to treat the *Shugden* affair as a internal Tibetan matter, but rather to have told the whole world about it, thus bringing it to the attention of an international public. We have to conclude from the committed discussions of the parliamentary members that the power and potential influence of the *Shugden* followers are actually more significant than one would have thought from the previous official statements out of Dharamsala.

On the third day of the session the situation in parliament had reached such a dead end that there seemed to be nothing more to say. What do the representatives of Tibetans in exile do in such a situation? — They consult the state oracle! It is not the members of parliament as the representatives of the people’s will but rather the oracle god *Pehar* who decides which course the government is to steer in the controversy surrounding the recalcitrant *Dorje Shugden*. The grotesqueness of the situation can hardly be topped, since *Pehar* and *Shugden* — as we learn from the writings of both parties — are the most bitter of enemies. How, then, is the Mongolian god (*Pehar*) supposed to provide an objective judgment about his arch-enemy (*Shugden*)? Indeed, it was *Pehar*, who in 1996 prophesied for the Dalai Lama that his life and hence the fate of Tibet were endangered by the *Shugden* cult. In contrast, the *Shugden* oracle announced that the *Kundun* has been falsely advised by *Pehar* for years. Hence what the state oracle consulted by parliament would say was clear in advance. The advice was to combat the *Shugden* followers with uncompromising keenness.

This interesting case is thus a matter of a war between two oracle gods who seek control over the politics of Tibet. No other example since the flight of the Dalai Lama (in 1959) has so clearly revealed to the public that “gods” are at work behind the Tibetan state, the *realpolitik* of the *Kundun*, and the power groupings of the society of Tibetans in exile. One may well be completely skeptical about such entities, but one cannot avoid acknowledging that the ruling elite and the subjects of the Lamaist state are guided by just such an ancient world view. How these occult struggles are to be reconciled with the untiringly repeated professions of belief in democracy is difficult to comprehend from a western-oriented way of thinking.

Dharamsala is completely aware that antidemocratic methods must arouse disquiet in the West. For example, in contrast to before, since the mid-eighties reports about the pronouncements of oracles no longer play a large role in the *Tibetan Review* (the exile Tibetans’ most important foreign-language organ of the press). Only since the “*Shugden affair*” (1996) has the excessive use of oracle mediums in the politics of the Tibetans in exile been rediscovered and become known worldwide. In monastic circles it is openly joked that the *Kundun* employs more oracles than ministers. “Favorites and sorcerers manipulate the sovereign”, it says in a Spanish magazine, with “demons and deities fighting to control people’s minds ...” (*Más Allá de la Ciencia*, No. 103, 1997).

Nevertheless, the Kundun has succeeded amazingly well in marginalizing the *Shugden* cult internationally and branding it as medieval superstition. For example, the German news magazine, *Der Spiegel*, which normally takes an extremely critical stance towards religious matters, was prepared to blindly take up the official version of the *Shugden* story from Dharamsala: the *Shugden* followers, *Der Spiegel* reported, were responsible for two (!) murders and their flight could be traced to China and the Chinese secret service (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 119). Nearly all western media stereotypically repeat that the ritual murderers came from the ranks of the protective god (for example, *Time Magazine Asia*, September 28, 1998).

One of the arguments of the *Shugden* followers in this “battle of the gods” is the claim that the Dalai Lama is engaged in selling his own country to the Chinese. He (they argue) is not acting in the interests of his people at all, since in his Strasbourg Declaration he renounced the national sovereignty of Tibet as his goal.

It is not possible for us to form a final judgment about such a charge; however, what we can in any case assume is the fact that the Mongolian war god *Pehar* (the Nechung oracle) can have no interest in the (well-being of the) Tibetans and their nation, against whom he in former times grimly struggled as a Hor Mongol and who then enslaved him. Of course, the national interests of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama could also collide with his worldwide ambitions concerning the spread of Tantric Buddhism. We shall return to this topic in our article on his politics towards China.

If — as the tantric belief maintains- deities are pulling the strings behind the scenes of “human” politics, then a direct consequence of this is that *magic* (as an invocatory art of gaining influence over gods and demons) must be counted among the “political” activities *par excellence*. Magic as statecraft is therefore a Tibetan specialty. Let us take a closer look at this “portfolio”.

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### Footnotes:

[1] Here we ought to ask how a lesser deity like *Pehar* is able to predict the future at all for the hierarchically superior Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara* and the incarnated time god (*Kalachakra*) who are embodied in the Dalai Lama.

[2] According to statements by the followers of *Shugden*, the Fifth Dalai Lama is supposed to have later changed his mind and prayed to the protective deity. He is even said to have molded the first statue of Dorje Shugden with his own hands and have composed prayers to the protective god. This statue is said to currently be found in Nepal.

[3] Trijang Rinpoche is the reincarnation of the deceased lama who previously initiated the Fourteenth Dalai Lama into the *Shugden* cult whilst his teacher.

[4] Up until now (February 1998) the police claim to have identified two of the six murderers. These have slipped over the border into Nepal, however.

## 8. MAGIC AS A POLITICAL INSTRUMENT

Since his flight from Tibet (in 1959), the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has negotiated the international political and cultural stage like a sensitive democrat and enlightened man of the world. As a matter of course he lays claim to all the western “virtues” of humanism, freedom of opinion, rational argument, belief in technical and scientific progress, etc. One gains the impression that he is an open-minded and modern president of a modern nation, who masterfully combines his cosmopolitanism with an elevated, spiritually based, ethical system. But this practical, reasoning facade is deceptive. Behind it is hidden a deeply rooted belief in supernatural powers and magic practices which are supposed to exercise a decisive influence upon social and political events.

### Invocation of demons

Since time immemorial ritual magic and politics have been one in Tibet. A large proportion of these magic practices are devoted to the annihilation of enemies, and especially to the neutralizing of political opponents. The help of demons was necessary for such ends. And they could be found everywhere — the Land of Snows all but overflowed with terror gods, fateful spirits, vampires, ghouls, vengeful goddesses, devils, messengers of death and similar entities, who, in the words of Matthias Hermanns, “completely overgrew the mild and goodly elements [of Buddhism] and hardly let them reveal their advantages” (Hermanns, 1965, p. 401).

For this reason, invocations of demons were not at all rare occurrences nor were they restricted to the spheres of personal and family life. They were in general among the most preferred functions of the lamas. Hence, “demonology” was a high science taught at the monastic universities, and ritual dealings with malevolent spirits were — as we shall see in a moment — an important function of the lamaist state. [1]

For the demons to appear they have to be offered the appropriate objects of their lust as a sacrifice, each class of devil having its own particular taste. René von Nebesky-Wojkowitz describes a number of culinary specialties from the Lamaist “demon recipe books”: cakes made of dark flour and blood; five different sorts of meat, including human flesh; the skull of the child of an incestuous relationship filled with blood and mustard seeds; the skin of a boy; bowls of blood and brain; a lamp filled with human fat with a wick made of human hair; and a dough like mixture of gall, brain, blood and human entrails (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, p. 261).

Once the gods had accepted the sacrifice they stood at the ritual master’s disposal. The four-armed protective deity, *Mahakala*, was considered a particularly active assistant when it came to the destruction of enemies. In national matters his bloodthirsty emanation, the six-handed *Kschetrapala*, was called upon. The magician in charge wrote the war god’s mantra on a piece of

paper in gold ink or blood from the blade of a sword together with the wishes he hoped to have granted, and began the invocation.

Towards the end of the forties the Gelugpa lamas sent *Kschetrapala* into battle against the Chinese. He was cast into a roughly three-yard high sacrificial cake (or *torma*). This was then set alight outside Lhasa, and whilst the priests lowered their victory banner the demon freed himself and flew in the direction of the threatened border with his army. A real battle of the spirits took place here, as a “nine-headed Chinese demon”, who was assumed to have assisted the Communists in all matters concerning Tibet, appeared on the battlefield. Both spirit princes (the Tibetan and the Chinese) have been mortal enemies for centuries. Obviously the nine-headed emerged from this final battle of the demons as the victor.

The Chinese claim that 21 individuals were killed in this enemy ritual so that their organs could be used to construct the huge *torma*. Relatives of the victims are supposed to have testified to this (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 29). Now, one could with good reason doubt the Chinese accusations because of the political situation between the “Middle Kingdom” and the “Roof of the World”, but not because they contradict the logic of Tibetan rites of war — these have been recorded in numerous tantric texts.

Likewise in the middle of last century, the Yellow Hats from the Samye monastery were commissioned by the Tibetan government with the task of capturing the army of the red *tsan* demons in four huge “cross-hairs” in order to then send them off against the enemies of the Land of Snows. This magic instrument, a right-angled net of many-colored threads, stood upon a multistage base, each of which was filled with such tantric substances as soil from charnel fields, human skulls, murder weapons, the tips of the noses, hearts, and lips of men who died an unnatural death, poisonous plants, and similar things. The repulsive mixture was supposed to attract the *tsan* like a moth to a candle, so that they would become inescapably caught in the spells said over the spirit trap (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, p. 258). Following the seven-day deep meditation of a high lama it was ready and the demons could be given the command to set out against the enemy.

Such a ritual is also said to have summoned up a terrible earthquake and great panic in Nepal in earlier times, when Tibet was at war with the Nepalese. Experience had shown, however, that it sometimes takes a long time before the effects of such harmful rites are felt. It took two decades after the successful occupation of Tibet by the English (in 1904) before there was an earthquake in the Indian province of Bihar in which a number of British soldiers lost their lives. The Tibetans also traced this natural disaster back to magical activities which they had conducted prior to the invasion.

**“Voodoo magic”**

The practice widely known from the Haitian voodoo religion of making a likeness of an enemy or a doll and torturing or destroying this in their place is also widespread in Tibetan Buddhism. Usually, some substance belonging to the opponent, be it a hair or a swatch from their clothing, has to be incorporated into the substitute. It is, however, sufficient to note their name on a piece of paper. Even so, sometimes hard-to-find ingredients are necessary for an effective destructive ritual, as shown by the following Buddhist ritual: "Draw a red magic diagram in the form of a half-moon, then write the name and lineage of the victim on a piece of cotton which has been used to cover the corpse of a plague victim. As ink, use the blood of a dark-skinned Brahmin girl. Call upon the protective deities and hold the piece of material in black smoke. Then lay it in the magic diagram. Swinging a magic dagger made from the bones of a plague victim, recite the appropriate incantation a hundred thousand times. Then place the piece of material there where the victim makes his nightly camp" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, p.260). This induces the death of the person. [2]

The same ritual text includes a recipe for the inducement of madness: "draw a white magic circle on the summit of a mountain and place the figure of the victim in it which you have to prepare from the deadly leaves of a poisonous tree. Then write the name and lineage of the victims on this figure with white sandalwood resin. Hold it in the smoke from burnt human fat. Whilst you recite the appropriate spell, take a demon dagger made of bone in your right hand and touch the head of the figure with it. Finally, leave it behind in a place where *mamo* demonesses are in the habit of congregating" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, p. 261).

Such "voodoo practices" were no rare and unhealthy products of the Nyingmapa sect or the despised pre-Buddhist Bonpos. Under the Fifth Dalai Lama they became part of the elevated politics of state. The "Great Fifth" had a terrible "recipe book" (the *Golden Manuscript*) recorded on black thangkas which was exclusively concerned with magical techniques for destroying an enemy. In it there a number of variations upon the so-called *gan tad* ritual are also described: a man or a woman depicting the victim are drawn in the center of a circle. They are shackled with heavy chains around their hands and feet. Around the figures the tantra master has written harmful sayings like the following. "the life be cut, the heart be cut, the body be cut, the power be cut, the descent be cut" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1993, p. 483). The latter means that the victim's relatives should also be destroyed. Now the menstrual blood of a prostitute must be dripped onto the spells, the drawings are given hair and nails. According to some texts a little dirt scraped from a shoe, or some plaster from the victim's house are sufficient. Then the ritual master folds the paper up in a piece of cloth. The whole thing is stuffed into a yak's horn with further horrible ingredients which we would rather not have to list. Gloves have to be worn when conducting the ritual, since the substances can have most harmful effects upon the magician if he comes into contact with them. In a cemetery he entreats an army of demons to descend upon the horn and impregnate it with their destructive energy. Then it is buried on the land of the enemy, who dies soon afterwards.

The "Great Fifth" is supposed to have performed a "voodoo" ritual for the defeat of the Kagyupa and the Tsang clan in the Ganden monastery temple. He regarded them, "whose spirit has been clouded by *Mara* and their devotion to the Karmapa", as enemies of the faith (Ahmad, 1970, p.

103). In the ritual, a likeness of the Prince of Tsang in the form of a *torma* (dough cake) was employed. Incorporated into the dough figure were the blood of a boy fallen in the battles, human flesh, beer, poison, and so on. 200 years later, when the Tibetans went to war with the Nepalese, the lamas had a substitute made of the commander of the Nepalese army and conducted a destructive ritual with this. The commander died soon after and the enemy army's plans for invasion had to be abandoned (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1993, p. 495).

Among other things, Tibetan magic is premised upon the existence of a force or energy possessed by every living creature and which is known as *la*. However, this life energy does not need to be stored within a person, it can be found completely outside of them, in a lake, a mountain, a tree, or an animal for instance. A person can also possess several *las*. If one of his energy centers is attacked or destroyed he is able to regenerate himself out of the others. Among aristocrats and high lamas we may find the *la* in "royal" animals like the snow lion, bears, tigers, or elephants. For the "middle class" of society we have animals like the ox, horse, yak, sheep, or mule, and for the lower classes the rat, dog, and scorpion. The *la* can also keep alive a family, a tribe, or a whole people. For example, Lake Yamdrok is said to contain the life energy of the Tibetan nation and there is a saying that the whole people would die out if it went dry. There is in fact a rumor among the Tibetans in exile that the Chinese planned to drain the entire lake (*Tibetan Review*, January 1992, p. 4).

If a tantra master wants to put an enemy out of action through magic, then he must find his *la* and launch a ritual attack upon it. This is of course also true for political opponents. If the life energy of an enemy is hidden in a tree, for instance, then it makes sense to fell it. The opponent would instantly collapse. Every lama is supposed on principle to be capable of locating the *la* of a person via astrology and clairvoyance.

### **Magic wonder weapons**

In the armories of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and of the "Great Fifth", we find the "magic wheel with the sword spokes", described by a contemporary lama in the following words: "It is a magic weapon of fearsome efficacy, a great wheel with eight razor-edge sharpened swords as spokes. Our magicians employed it a long time ago in the battle against foreign intruders. The wheel was charged with magic forces and then loosed upon the enemy. It flew spinning through the air at the enemy troops and its rapidly rotating spikes mowed the soldiers down in their hundreds. The devastation wrought by this weapon was so terrible that the government forbade that it ever be used again. The authorities even ordered that all plans for its construction be destroyed" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, p. 257).

A further magic appliance, which was, albeit without success, still put to use under the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, was to be found in a Yellow Hat monastery near Lhasa (Kardo Gumpa). It was referred to as the "mill of the death demons" and consisted of two small round stones resting upon each other, the upper one of which could be rotated. René von Nebesky-Wojkowitz reports how

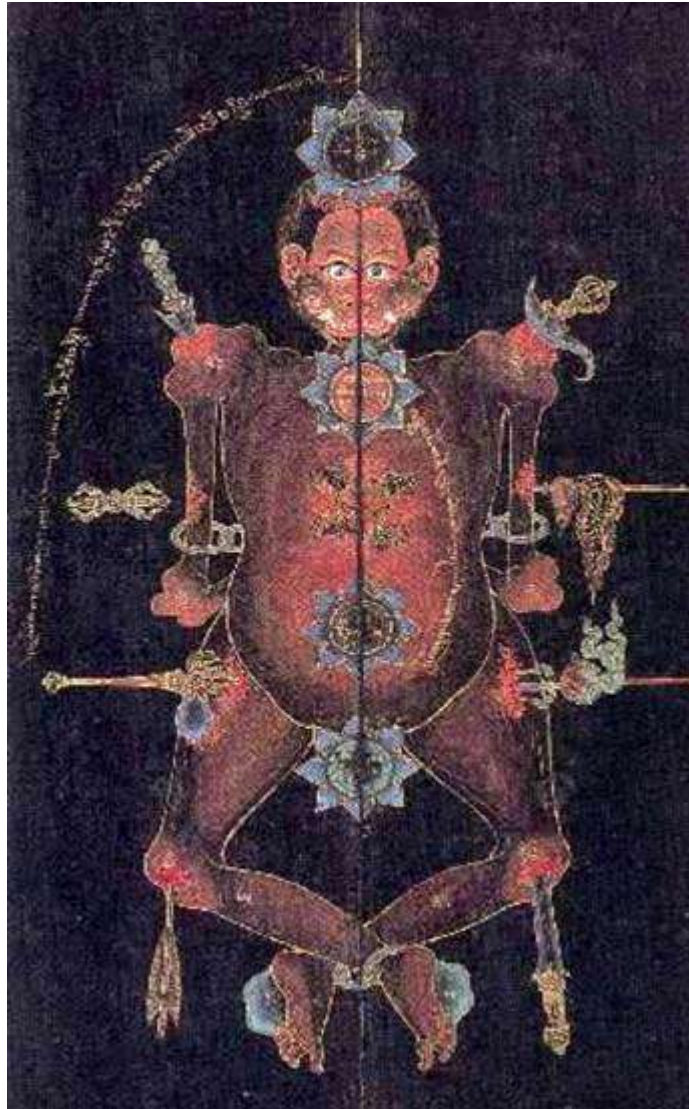
the lamas started up this killing machine in 1950 at the beginning of the conflict with China: "The 'Mill of the Death Demons' was employed by the Tibetan government to kill the leaders of the opposing party. A priest who was especially experienced in the arts of black magic was appointed by the authorities to operate the instrument. In meditations extending over weeks he had to try to transfer the life energy (*la*) of the people he was supposed to kill into a number of mustard seeds. If he noticed from curtains indications that he had succeeded, then he laid the seeds between the stones and crushed them. .... The exterminating force which emanated from this magic appliance is supposed to even have had its effect upon the magician who operated it. Some of them, it is said, died after turning the 'Mill of the Death Demons'" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, pp. 257-258).

### **The “Great Fifth” as magician and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama**

The Fifth Dalai Lama was a enthusiast and a master of magic ritual politics. A distinction was drawn in the ceremonies he conducted between continuous, annually repeated state events, and special, mostly enemy-combating events. His “rituals [were] concerned with power; spiritual and political”, writes Samten Karmay, “... we stand in the arena of the dawn of modern Tibetan history” (Karmay, 1988, p. 26).

The god-king was firmly convinced that he owed his political victories primarily to “the profound potency of the tantric rites” and only secondarily to the intervention of the Mongolians (Ahmad, 1970, p. 134). According to a Kagyupa document, the Mongolian occupation of the Land of Snows was the work of nine terror gods who were freed by the Gelugpas under the condition that they fetch the Mongolian hordes into Tibet to protect their order. “But in the process they brought much suffering on our land”, we read at the close of the document (Bell, 1994, p. 98).

The visions and practices of the magic obsessed Fifth Dalai Lama are -as we have already mentioned — recorded in two volumes he wrote: firstly the *Sealed and Secret Biography* and then the *Golden Manuscript*. This abundantly illustrated book of rituals, which resembles the notorious *grimoires* (books of magic) of the European Middle Ages, was, in the master’s own words, written “for all those who wish to do drawings and paintings of the heavens and the deities” (Karmay, 1988, p. 19). [3]



***Magic drawing from the Golden Manuscript of the Fifth Dalai Lama***

We have no direct knowledge of any modern “voodoo practices” performed by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who has chosen the magician prince from the 17th century, the “Great Fifth”, as his most important model. Here, the *Kundun* has just as skillfully succeeded in laying a veil over the shadowy world of his occult ritual life as with the sexual magic initiations of Tantrism. But there are rumors and insinuations which allow one to suspect that he too deliberately conducts or has conducted such tantric killing rites.

In one case this is completely obvious and he himself has confirmed this. Thus we may read in the most recent edition of his autobiography of how he staged a rite connected to the *Kalachakra Tantra* on the day of Mao Zedong’s death. „On the second the ceremony’s three days, Mao died.

And the third day, it rained all morning. But, in the afternoon, there appeared one of the most beautiful rainbows I have ever seen. I was certain that it must be a good omen” we hear from the Dalai Lama’s own mouth (Dalai Lama XIV, 1990, 222). The biographer of His Holiness, Claude B. Levenson, reports of this ritual that it was a matter of “an extremely strict practice which demanded complete seclusion lasting several weeks combined with a very special teaching of the Fifth Dalai Lama” (Levenson, 1990, p. 242). Recalling the strange death of the Empress Dowager Ci Xi and her imperial adoptive son described above, one may well ask whether this “strict practice” may not have been a killing rite recorded in the *Golden Manuscript* of the “Great Fifth”. In Buddhist circles the death of Mao Zedong is also celebrated as the victory of spiritual/magic forces over the raw violence of materialism.

In such a context, and from a tantric/magic viewpoint, the visiting of Deng Xiaoping by Gyalo Thondup, one of the Dalai Lama’s brothers and himself a tulku, to may also have a momentous significance. Thondup negotiated with the Chinese party head over the question of Tibet. Deng died a few days after this meeting, on February 12, 1997 (*Playboy* [German edition], March 1998, p. 44).

### **Mandala politics**

In contrast, the Fourteenth Dalai constantly and quite publicly conducts a magic practice which is less spectacular, but from a tantric point of view just as significant as the killing of a political opponent — it is just that this is not recognized as a act of magic. We are talking about the construction of mandalas, especially the *Kalachakra* sand mandala.

We have already reported in detail on the homologies between a tantric mandala, the body of a yogi, the social environment, and the universe. Consistently thought through, this equivalence means that the construction of a mandala must be regarded as a magic political act. Through a magic diagram, a tantra master can “energetically” occupy and lay claim to the location of its construction and the corresponding environs. People within range of the power of such a magic architectural construction are influenced by the mandala’s energy and their consciousness is manipulated by it.

The *Kalachakra* sand mandala thus serves not only to initiate adepts but also likewise as a magic title of possession, with which control over a particular territory can be legitimated. Accordingly, the magic power of the diagram gives its constructors the chance to symbolically conquer new territories. One builds a magic circle (a mandala) and “anchors” it in the region to be claimed. Then one summonses the gods and supplicates them to take up residence in the “mandala palace”. (The mandala is so to speak “energized” with divine forces.) After a particular territory has been occupied by a mandala (or cosmogram), it is automatically transformed into a sacred center of Buddhist cosmology.[4] Every construction of a mandala also implies — if one takes it seriously — the magic subjugation of the inhabitants of the region in which the “magic circle” is constructed.

In the case of the *Kalachakra* sand mandala the places in which it has been built are transformed into domains under the control of the Tibetan time gods. Accordingly, from a tantric viewpoint, the *Kalachakra* mandala constructed at great expense in New York in 1991 would be a cosmological demonstration of power which aimed to say that the city now stood under the governing authority or at least spiritual influence of *Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata*. Since in this case it was the Fourteenth Dalai Lama who conducted the ritual as the supreme tantra master, he would have to be regarded as the spiritual/magic sovereign of the metropolis. Such fantastic speculations are a product of the ancient logic of his own magic system, and are incompatible with our ideas. We are nonetheless convinced that the laws of magic affect human reality proportional to the degree to which people *believe* in them.

Further, there is no doubt that the magic diagrams evoke an exceptional fascination in some observers. This is confirmed, for example, by Malcolm Arth, art director of an American museum in which Tibetan monks constructed a *Kalachakra* sand mandala: "The average museum visitor spends about ten seconds before a work of art, but for this exhibit, time is measured in minutes, sometime hours. Even the youngsters, who come into the museum and run around as if it were a playground — these same youngsters walk into this space, and something happens to them. They're transformed" (Bryant, 1992, pp. 245-246). The American Buddhist, Barry Bryant, even talks of an "electric kind of energy" which pervades the space in which the *Kalachakra* mandala is found (Bryant, 1992, p. 247).

However, what most people from the West evaluate as a purely artistic pleasure, is experienced by the lamas and their western followers as a numinous encounter with supernatural forces and powers concentrated within a mandala. This idea can be extended so far that modern exhibitions of Tibetan artworks can be conceived by their Buddhist organizers as temples and initiation paths through which the visitors knowingly or unknowingly proceed. Mircea Eliade has described the progression through a holy place (a temple) in ancient times as follows: "Every ritual procession is equivalent to a progression to the center, and the entry into a temple repeats the entry into a mandala in an initiation or the progress of the *kundalini* through the chakras" (Eliade, 1985, p. 253).

The major Tibet exhibition "Weisheit und Liebe" (Wisdom and Love), on view in Bonn in the summer of 1996 as well as at a number locations around the world, was designed along precisely these lines by Robert A. F. Thurman and Marilyn M. Rhie. The conception behind this exhibition, Thurman writes, "is symbolically significant. It ... draws its guiding principle from the mandala of the "wheel of time" [*Kalachakra*], the mystic site which embodies the perfect history and cosmos of the Buddha. ... The arrangement of the individual exhibits reflects the deliberate attempt to simulate the environment of a Tibetan temple" (Thurman and Rhie, 1996, pp. 13–14).

At the entrance one passed a *Kalachakra* sand mandala. The visitor then entered the various historical phases of Indian Buddhism arranged into separate rooms, beginning with the legends from the life of Buddha, then *Hinayana*, *Mahayana*, and *Vajrayana*. The simulated “initiator path” led on to Tibet passing through the four main schools in the following order: Nyingmapa, Sakyapa, Kagyupa, and then Gelugpa. After the “visitor/initiator” had so to speak obtained the secret teachings of the various sects, he or she stepped into the final “hall” of the exhibition temple. This was again, like the start, dedicated to the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

Through the construction of this exhibition the history of Buddhism and of Tibet was presented as a mystery play played out over centuries. Every single epoch in the history of the Buddhist doctrine counted as a kind of initiatory stage in the evolutionary progression of humanity which was supposed to culminate in the establishment of a global *Shambhala* state. The same initiatory role was filled by the four Tibetan schools. They all stood — in the interpretation of the exhibitor — in a hierarchic relation to one another. Each step up was based on the one before it: the Sakyapas on the Nyingmapas, the Kagyupas on the Sakyapas, and the Gelugpas on the Kagyupas. The message was that the history of Buddhism, especially in Tibet, had had to progress like a initiator through the individual schools and sects step by step so as to further develop its awareness and then reach its highest earthly goal in the person of the Dalai Lama.

The visitor entered the exhibition through a room which contained a *Kalachakra* sand mandala (the “time palace”). This was supposed to proclaim that from now on he or she was moving through the dimension of (historical) time. In accordance with the cyclical world view of Buddhism, however, the journey through time ended there where it had begun. Thus at the end of the tour the visitor left the exhibition via the same room through which he or she had entered it, and once more passed by the sand mandala (the “time palace”).

If the Tibet exhibition in Bonn was in Thurman’s words supposed to have a symbolic significance, then the final message was catastrophic for the visitor. The final (!) image in the “temple exhibition” (before one re-entered the room containing the *Kalachakra* sand mandala) depicted the apocalyptic *Shambhala* battle, or (as the catalog literally referred to it) the “Buddhist Armageddon”. [5] We would like to quote from the official, enthusiastically written explanatory text which accompanied the thangka: “The forces of Good from the kingdom of *Shambhala* fight against the powers of Evil who hold the world in their control, centuries in the future. Phalanxes of soldiers go into combat, great carts full of soldiers, as small as Lilliputians are drawn into battle by huge white elephants, laser-like (!) weapons loose their fire and fantastic elephant-like animals mill together and struggle beneath the glowing sphere of the kingdom” (Thurman and Rhie, 1996, p. 482). With this doomsday vision before their eyes the visitors leave the “temple” and return to the *Kalachakra* sand mandala.

But who was the ruler of this time palace, who is the time god (*Kalachakra*) and the time goddess (*Vishvamata*) in one? None other than the patron of the Tibet exhibition in Bonn, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. He destroyed the *Kalachakra* sand mandala in Bonn in the ritual we have

described above and then absorbed its energies (the time gods residing in it). If we pursue this tantric logic further, then after the absorption of the mandala energies the *Kundun* assumed control over the region which had been sealed by the magic diagram (the sand mandala). In brief, he became the spiritual regent of Bonn! Let us repeat, this is not our idea, it is rather the ancient logic of the tantric system. That it however in this instance corresponded with reality is shown by the enormous success His Holiness enjoyed in the German Bundestag (House of Representatives) after visiting his “*Kalachakra Temple*” in Bonn (in 1996). The Kohl government had to subsequently endure its most severe political acid test in relations with China because of the question of Tibet.

Scattered about the whole world in parallel to his *Kalachakra* initiations, sand mandalas have been constructed for the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. What appears to a western observer to be a valuable traditional work of art, is in its intentions a seal of power of the Tibetan gods and a magic foundation for the striven-for world dominion of the ADI BUDDHA (in the figure of the *Kundun*).

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#### Footnotes:

[1] The discipline is indebted to the Austrian, René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, for the most profound insight into Tibetan demonology, his great work, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. His early death, and his wife’s suicide shortly afterwards are seen by the Tantra researcher, John Blofeld, as an act of revenge by the spirits whom he described.

[2] Of course, these killing practices stand in irreconcilable opposition to the Buddhist commandment to not harm any living being. To gloss over this discordance, the lamas have a clever excuse on hand: the ritual master prevents the victim from perpetrating further bad deeds which would only burden him with bad karma and bring him certain damnation.

[3] The *Golden Manuscript* is considered the precursor of the black thangkas, which otherwise first emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They were especially developed for the evocation of tantric terror gods. The background of the images is always of the darkest color; the illustrations are sparsely drawn, often in gold ink — hence the name of the *Golden Manuscript*. This technique gives the images a mysterious, dangerous character. The deities “spring out of the awful darkness of cosmic night, all aflame” comments Guiseppe Tucci (Karmay, 1988, p. 22).

[4] Such a magic occupation does not even need to be performed via an external act; a specially trained lama can mentally execute it through the power of imagination alone.

[5] The catalog text did indeed use the Hebrew term *armageddon*, just as the doomsday guru Shoko Asahara also spoke of “Armageddon”.

## 9. THE WAR GODS BEHIND THE MASK OF PEACE

When Buddhism is talked about today in the West, then the warlike past of Tibet is not a topic. The majority of people understand the Buddha's teaching to be a religion with a program that includes inner and outer peace, humans living together in harmony, the rejection of any form of violence or aggression, a commandment against all killing, and in general a radically pacifist attitude. Such a fundamental ethical attitude is rightly demanded by Buddhists through an appeal to their founder. Admittedly, the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni, was born as the descendant of a king from the warrior caste, however, he abandoned his family, became "homeless", and distanced himself from every aspect of the art of war. He did so not just for moral reasons, but also because he recognized that wars are the expression of one's own misdirected awareness and that the dualism taken to its limits in war contained a false view of the world. Reduced to a concise formula, what he wanted to say with this was that in the final instance the ego and its enemy are one. Shakyamuni was a pacifist because he was an idealist epistemologist. Only later, in *Mahayana* Buddhism, did the ethical argument for the fundamental pacifism of the *dharma* (the doctrine) emerge alongside the philosophical one. A strict ban on killing, the requirement of nonviolence, and compassion with all living beings were considered the three supreme moral maxims.

Both of these arguments against war, the epistemological and the human-political, today play a fundamental role in the international self-presentation of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Tirelessly and upon countless occasions over the last decades His Holiness has done what he can for world peace. For this reason he received the Nobel peace prize in 1989. His pacifist sermons and political programs were not the least reason for the fact that the Tibet of old (prior to the Chinese occupation) was increasingly seen and admired in the West as a peaceful sanctuary, inhabited by unwarlike and highly ethically developed people, a paradise on earth. A western student of the dharma has summarized Tibet's history in the following concise sentence: "Buddhism turned their [the Tibetan] society from a fierce grim world of war and intrigue into a peaceful, colorful, cheerful realm of pleasant und meaningful living" (quoted by Lopez, 1998, p. 7). With this longed-for image the *Kundun* seized upon a thread already spun by numerous Euro-American authors (since the nineteen-thirties), above all James Hilton, in his best-seller *The Lost Horizon*.

Under the leadership of their lamas, the Tibetans in exile have thus succeeded in presenting themselves to the world public as a spiritual people of peace threatened by genocide, who in a period rocked by conflicts wish to spread their pacifist message. "A confession with which one cannot go wrong", wrote the German news magazine, *Spiegel*, in reference to Tibetan Buddhism, "Two-and-a-half thousand years of peaceableness in place of the inquisition, monks who always seemed cheerful rather than officious and impertinent religious leaders, hope for nirvana rather than the threat of *jihad* — Buddhism harms no-one and has become *trendy*" (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 109). And the German Buddhist and actor Sigmar Solbach explained to his television audience that "a war has never been fought in the name of Buddhism" (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 109). Regrettably, the opposite is the case — countless wars have been fought in the name of Buddhism just as they have in the name of Christianity. The *Shambhala myth* has rightly — as

we shall demonstrate on the basis of historical events — been described as the “Buddhist jihad” (holy war).

### **The aggressiveness of the Tibetan tutelary gods (dharmapalas)**

When we examine the iconography of Tantric Buddhism it literally swarms with aggressive warriors, demons, vampires, monsters, sword bearers, flame magicians, and avenging gods, who have at their disposal an overflowing arsenal of weapons: spears, spikes, darts, shields, clubs, hooks, slings, knives, daggers, and all manner of killing machines. This downright grotesque collection of repellant figures reflects on the one hand the social struggles which Indian Buddhism had to endure in the dispute with Hinduism and later with Islam. On the other it is a dogmatic part of the tantric project, which makes wrath, aggression, murder, and the annihilation of enemies the starting point of its system of rituals. A total of three types of warlike deities are distinguished in *Vajrayana* Buddhism:

1. The horror aspect of a peaceful Buddha, the so-called *heruka*.
2. The “flesh-eating” dakini who challenges the adept on his initiatory path.
3. Warlike foreign gods who have been incorporated in the tantric system as “protectors of the faith” (*dharmapala*).

In all three cases the “wrathful gods” direct their potential for aggression outwards, against the “enemies of the faith”, and without exaggerating one can say that the *heruka* aspect of a Buddha plays just as great a role in the cultural life of Tibetan Buddhism as the peaceful aspect of a compassionate Bodhisattva.

In Lamaism, Tibet’s mystic history and “civilization” has always been experienced and portrayed as the coercion and enslavement of the local gods and demons. If these wanted to remain alive after their magic struggle with the magician lamas then they had to commit themselves under oath to serve in future as a protective guard under Tibetan command. Their basic warlike attitude was thus neither reduced at all nor transformed by Buddhism, rather it was used as a means to achieve its own ambitions and thus increased. This metapolitics of the Lamaist clergy has led to a systematic extension and expansion of its grotesque pandemonium, which afflicted the country across the centuries. There was no temple in which these monsters were not (and still are) prayed to. In the gloomy *gokhang*, the chamber or hall where their cult worship took (and still takes) place, hung (and still hang) their black thangkas, surrounded by an arsenal of bizarre weapons, masks and stuffed animals. Dried human organs were discovered there, the tanned skin of enemies and the bones of children. Earlier western visitors experienced this realm of shadows as a “chaotic, contradictory world like the images formed in a delirium” (Sierksma, 1966, p. 166).

There are dreadful rumors about the obscure rituals which were performed in the “horror chambers” (Austin Waddell), and not without reason, then human flesh, blood, and other bodily substances were considered the most effective sacrificial offerings with which to appease the terror gods. If this flow of bloody food for the demons ever dries up, then according to Tibetan prophecies they fall upon innocent people, indeed even upon lamas so as to still their vampire-like thirst (Hermanns, 1956, p. 198).



***Shrine of the tibetan war god Begtse***

The number of “red and black executioners”, as the “protectors of the doctrine” are sometimes known, is legion, since every place in the land is served by its own regional demons. Nonetheless some among them are especially prominent, like the war god *Begtse*, for example, also known as *Chamsrin*. In the iconography he strides over corpses swinging a sword in his right hand and holding a human heart to his mouth with the left so that he can consume it. His spouse, *Dongmarma* the “red face”, chews at a corpse and is mounted upon a man-eating bear. Another

“protective god”, *Yama*, the judge of the dead, king of hell and an emanation of *Avalokiteshvara* (and thus also of the Dalai Lama), threatens with a club in the form of a child’s skeleton in his right hand. *Palden Lhamo*, the Tibetan god-king’s protective goddess whom we have already introduced, gallops through a lake of blood using her son’s skin as a saddle.

Even for the “superhuman” lamas this hellish army is only with difficulty kept under control. Hence it is not rare that demons succeed in breaking free of their magical chains and then loosing their wrath upon even the pious believers. For instance, in the past women were not allowed to enter the main temple of the Kumbum monastery because the “terrible gods” worshipped there would then fall into a blind rage and there was a danger that they would take it out upon all of humanity. Sometimes the rebellious spirits even seized the body of a naive monk, possessed him with their destructive energy and then ran amok in this form. Or, the other way around, a disappointed lama who felt himself to have been unjustly treated in life upon dying transformed into a merciless vengeful spirit. [1] The Tibetan government (the Kashag) and the Dalai Lama must also defend themselves time and again against acts of revenge by opposing protective spirits. In connection with the *Shugden* affair described above, James Burns refers to a total of 11 historical examples (Burns, Newsgroup 9).

The clergy in the Tibet of old was busy day and night defending themselves from foreign demons and keeping their own under control. This was not motivated by fear alone, then the fees for defensive rituals against malevolent spirits counted as a lucrative source of income if not the most significant of all. As soon as something did not seem right, the superstitious peoples suspected that a demon was at work and fetched a lama to act as an exorcist for a fee and drive it out.

The Dutch psychologist and cultural critic, Fokke Sierksma, interpreted the cult of the terror gods as an “incomplete acculturation of a warrior nation that for the sake of Buddhism has had to give up a part of itself, of a Buddhism that for that warrior nation has also had to abandon an integral part, while the two have not found ultimate reconciliation” (Sierksma, 1966, p. 168). We do not find it difficult to agree with this judgment. Yet it must be added that the abandonment of Buddhist principles like nonviolence and peaceableness did not first begin in Tibet; it is, rather, implicit in the tantric doctrine itself. Thus it was not the case that a pacifist Buddhism came out of India to tame a warlike country, rather, the Indian founding fathers of Tibetan Buddhism themselves brought numerous terror gods with them and thereby significantly added to the already existing army of native demons. *Mahakala*, *Vajrabhairava*, *Yama*, *Acala*, or whatever their names may be, are all of Indian origin.

### **Gesar of Ling: The Tibetan “Siegfried”**

Anybody who wishes to gain further insight into the ancient warrior mentality of the Tibetans cannot avoid studying the pre-Buddhist *Gesar* epic. Old shamanic beliefs and “heathen” uses of magic play just as great a role in the adventures of this national hero as the language of weapons. The adventures of *Gesar von Ling* have been compared with the Germanic Nibelungen epic, and

not without reason: daredevilry, braggadocio, intrepid courage, thirst for revenge, sporting contests, tumultuous slaughter, military strategy, tricks, deception, betrayal can be found in both, just like joy and suffering in love, courtly love, feminine devotion, rape, mighty amazons, sorceresses, marital infidelity, jealousy, revenge of the Furies. On the basis of the similarities spanning whole scenes it may not even be ruled out that the poets composing both epics drew upon the same sources. One difference lies perhaps in that in *Gesar's* milieu it is even more barbarically eaten and drunk than among the Germanic warriors.

Even if the name of the hero may be historically derived from a Tibetification of the Latin *Caesar* ("emperor"), his mythic origin is of a divine nature. The old soldier was dispatched from heaven to fulfill a mission. His divine parents sent him to earth so that he could free the country of Ling (Tibet) from an evil demon which, after many superhuman deeds, he also succeeded in doing. We do not intend to report here on the fantastic adventures of the hero. What interests us is *Gesar's* thoroughly aggressive mentality. The numerous episodes that tell of the proud self-awareness and physical strength of the women are especially striking, so that the epic can definitely not have been penned by a lama. In some versions (several widely differing ones are known) there are also quite heretical comments about the Buddhist clergy and a biting sarcasm which spares no aspect of monastic life. What remains beyond any criticism is, however, is an unbounded glorification of war. This made *Gesar* a model for all the military forces of central Asia.

As a sample of the bragging cruelty which dominates the whole epic, we quote a passage translated by Charles Bell — the song of a knight from *Gesar's* retinue:

We do not need swords; our right hands are enough.

We split the body in the middle,

and cut the side into pieces.

Other men use clubs made of wood;

We require no wood;

our thumbs and forefingers are enough.

We can destroy by rubbing thrice with our fingers.....

The blood of the liver [of our enemies] will escape from the mouth.

Though we do not injure the skin,

We will take out all the entrails through the mouth.

The man will still be alive,  
Though his heart will come to his mouth....  
This body [of our enemy] with eyes and head  
Will be made into a hat  
for the king of the white tent tribe.  
I offer the heart to the war god  
of the white people of Ling

(Bell, 1994, pp. 13-14)

There is little trace of ethics, morality, or Buddhist compassion here! In an anthology edited by Geoffrey Samuel, Pema Tsering and Rudolf Kaschewsky also indicate that “the basic principle [of the epic] is to seek one’s own advantage by any means available. Whether the opponent is led astray by deception, whether treachery is exploited or the other’s weakness brutally made use of, scruples or any qualms of conscience are entirely lacking. If there is a basic idea that runs through the whole work it is the principle that might is right” (Tsering and Kaschewsky in Samuel, 1994, p. 64).

But this is precisely what makes the pre-Buddhist Gesar myth so interesting for the philosophy of the Tantrics. It is for this reason that Geoffrey Samuel also reaches the conclusion that the epic is “a classical expression of the shamanic *Vajrayana* religion of Tibet” (Samuel, 1993, 55). This would indeed mean that both systems, the Tantric Buddhism of India and the pre-Buddhist shamanism of Tibet, entered into a culture-bearing symbiosis with one another.

The Nyingmapas, for example, saw in the hero (*Gesar*) an incarnation of Padmasambhava, who returned to drive the demons out of the Land of Snows. Other Lamaist interpreters of the epic celebrate *Gesar* as “lord over the three-layered cosmos” and as *Chakravartin* (Hummel, 1993, p. 53). The belief that the “Great Fifth” was an incarnation of the semi-divine warrior was and is still widely distributed. In eastern Tibet at the start of last century the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was worshipped as *Gesar* reborn. In contrast, the supreme clerical incarnation in Mongolia, the Jabsundamba Khutuktu, is considered to be an embodiment of *Gesar*’s miraculous horse.

A connection has also often been drawn between the rough daredevil and the *Shambhala* myth. Following his earthly demise he is supposed to have gone to the mythic country in order to wait

for the prophesied final battle. After he “has left this mortal world once more, there is, according to the Tibetans, a connection between him and the Lamaist apocalypse” (Hummel, 1993, p. 37).

Even in the twentieth century, his archetype as a militant salvational figure played an important role for the Tibetan guerrillas in the fifties and sixties. In the struggle against the Chinese Communists the return of the war hero was longed for so that Tibet could be freed from the “red tyranny”. The myth is currently again experiencing a renaissance in Tibetan underground circles. In 1982 there was a movement in the province of Amdo whose leader, Sonam Phuntsog, proclaimed himself to be an incarnation of *Gesar* the war hero. The group’s activities were mostly of a magic nature and consisted above all in the invocation of the terror gods.

In good dualist form, these announced via a possession that „now is the time when the deities of the ‘white side’ hold their heads high and the demons of the ‘dark side’ are defeated” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 229). It is astounding how seriously the “atheist” Chinese take such magic séances and that they ban them as “open rebellion”.

The *Gesar* myth is experiencing a renaissance in the West as well. For example, the Red Hat lama Chögyam Trungpa, allows the barbarian to be worshipped by his pupils in the USA as a militant role-model. In the meantime, the hero has become a symbol for freedom and self-confidence worthy of emulation for many western Buddhists who have not made the slightest effort to examine his atavistic lifestyle.

Even the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (“the greatest living prince of peace”) does not criticize the war hero, but rather goes so far as to see him — this view must be regarded as a high point of tantric inversion — as a master of compassion: “Could *Gesar* return one day, as some people claim and others believe?” asks the *Kundun*, and answers, “The fact is that he promised this. ... Is it not also said that *Gesar* is an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*, the Buddha of boundless compassion? He is thus also a master and masters have much power ...” (Levenson, 1990, p. 83). There is speculation in Buddhist circles on the basis of such quotations as to whether His Holiness (likewise an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*) is not also an embodiment of the barbaric *Gesar*, particularly since the “Great Fifth” also claimed to be so. The question of how compatible such a martial past can be with the award of the Nobel peace prize remains unanswered, however.

According to Ronald D. Schwartz, in the current protest movements in Tibet the return of the mythic warrior *Gesar*, the appearance of the *Shambhala* king, and the epiphany of Buddha *Maitreya* are eschatologically linked with the „immediate and tangible possibility of the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 231). Rainbows and earthquakes are supposed to show that superhuman forces are also at work in the rebellion. [2]

However, so that Gesar's martial character does not scare off western souls or bring them into conflict with their Buddhist ideals, the lamas solve the problem — as always in such cases — with a subjectification of the myth. Hence, in the adventures of Gesar Tarthang Tulku sees every adept's inner struggle with his bad self: "Interpreted symbolically, King Gesar, representing freedom and liberation from the bondage of ignorance, is the King of the human mind. The Kingdom of Ling is the realm of restless experience that must be unified and strengthened. The treasure to win and protect is our own understanding. The enemies that we must conquer are emotionality and ignorance" (quoted by Samuel, 1994, p. 65).

Western pupils, of whom hardly any may have read the violent epic, swallow such messages with shining eyes. But if it were consistently applied to the spiritual struggles, the *Gesar* pattern would imply that one would have to employ brutality, murder, underhandedness, disloyalty, rape, coarseness, boasting, mercilessness, and similar traits against oneself in order to attain enlightenment. What counts is victory, and in achieving it all means are allowed.

The political danger which can arise from such an undifferentiated glorification of *Gesar* may perhaps become obvious if we think back to the Nibelungen epic, which, as we have already mentioned, may according to several researchers draw upon the same mythic sources. For the majority of Germans the fateful glorification of Siegfried the dragonslayer by the national socialists (the Nazis) still raises a shudder. Yet in comparison to his barbaric Tibetan "brother", the blond Germanic knight still appears noble, honest, good-natured, and pious.

### **The Tibetan warrior kings and their clerical successors**

In the guidelines for a new form of government after the liberation of the Land of Snows from the imposition of the Chinese will, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama wrote (in 1993) that, "under the control of its kings and the Dalai Lamas the political system of Tibet was firmly anchored in its spiritual values. As a consequence peace and happiness reigned in Tibet" (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993b, p. 24).

Whether this statement is true can only be proved by the events of history. Let us cast a glance back then, into Tibet's past. As successful and brutal military leaders, the two most important kings of the Yarlung dynasty, Songtsen Gampo (617-650) and Trisong Detsen (742-803), extended their dominion deep into China with a thorough-going politics of war. Both were, at least according to the sagas, incarnations of Bodhisattvas, i.e., compassionate beings, although the Tibetan armies were feared throughout all of inner Asia for their merciless cruelty. Reports from the Tang annals also admire the highly developed art of war of the Tibetan "barbarians". Even modern authors still today enthuse about the good old days when Tibet was still a major military power: „These armies were probably better run and disciplined than those of late Medieval Europe and would be recognisable in their general structure to Generals of the modern era like generals like Wellington and Rommel", we can read in a 1990 issue of the *Tibetan Review* (*Tibetan Review*, October 1990, p. 15).

After the fall of the Yarlung dynasty there were indeed no more major military incidents for centuries. But this was in no way because the Tibetans had become more peaceful and compassionate. Completely the opposite was true, the individual sects in mutual dispute and the various factions among the people were so weakened by the frequent internecine wars that it was not possible for an overarching state to be formed. It was not at all rare for great lamas and their many monastic minions to wage outright war against one another. In such conflicts, none of the orientations shied away from inviting outsiders into the country so as to take to the field against the others with their help. Up until well into the twentieth century the Chinese and Mongolians could thus in any case intervene in Tibetan politics as the invited allies of particular monasteries.

For example, in 1290 the Brigung monastery of the Kagyupa sect was razed to the ground by armed Sakyapa monks with help from the Mongolians. "The misery was greater even than among those who have gone into Hell!" (Bell, 1994, p. 67), a Red Hat text records. The only reason the numerous military disputes in the history of the Land of Snows are not more widely known about is because they usually only involved smaller groups. Hence the battles neither continued for long, nor were they spread over a wide territory. In addition, the "pure doctrine" officially forbade any use of violence and thus all disputes between the orders were hushed up or repressed as soon as possible by both parties. As paradox as it may well sound, the country remained relatively "quiet" and "peaceful", because all of the parties were so embroiled in wars with one another. But in the moment in which it came to the creation of a larger state structure under the Fifth Dalai Lama in the 17th century, a most cruelly conducted civil war was the necessary precondition.

### **The Dalai Lamas as supreme war lords**

These days there is an unwillingness to speak about this terrible civil war between the Gelugpas and the Kagyupas from which the "Great Fifth" emerged as the hero of the battlefield. We know that the Fifth Dalai Lama called up the war god *Begtse* against the Tibetans several times so as to force through his political will. Additionally, in eastern Tibet he was celebrated as an incarnation of the ancient hero, *Gesar*. He himself was the author of a number of battle hymns like the following:

Brave and tested are the warriors,

sharp and irresistible the weapons,

hard and unbreakable the shields,

Fleet and enduring the horses.

(Sierksma, 1966, p. 140)

This brutal call to absolutely annihilate the enemy into its third generation was also composed by him:

Make the lines like trees that have had their roots cut;

Make the female lines like brooks that have dried up in winter;

Make the children and grandchildren like eggs smashed against rocks;

Make the servants and followers like heaps of grass consumed by fire;

Make their dominion like a lamp whose oil has been exhausted;

In short, annihilate any traces of them, even their names.

(quoted by Sperling, 2001, p. 318)

With these instructions to batter his enemy's children to death against the rocks and to make their women barren, the „Great Fifth“ (the preeminent historical model for the current Fourteenth Dalai Lama) turned to the Mongolians under Gushri Khan and thus legitimated the terrible deeds they inflicted upon the Tibetans. „One may say with some confidence,“ Elliot Sperling writes, „that the Fifth Dalai Lama does not fit the standard image that many people today have of a Dalai Lama, particularly the image of a Nobel Peace Prize laureate“ (Sperling, 2001, p. 319). Barely two centuries later (at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) a Red Hat lama sought revenge for the humiliation of his order by the Dalai Lama, and fetched the Indian gurkhas into the country.

The “Great Thirteenth” himself formed an army consisting of regular troops, a lay militia, and the “golden army” as the monastic soldiers were known. Warrior monks were nothing out of the ordinary in the Tibet of old, although their training and their military equipment was less than desirable. They firmly believed in the law of violence, worshipped their special deities, and maintained their own secret cults. Lama ‘Longear’ was the leader of the troops in the lamasery, it says in western travel report of a lama commander (at the start of the twentieth century). “Although a monk, he didn't know how to say his prayers and because he had killed several people was not allowed to have part in the chanting services. But he was considered a man of courage and audacity — greatly feared in the lamasery, a mighty friend and terror to his enemies” (quoted by Sierksma, 1966, p. 130).

The Tibetan army assembled by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was composed of three services: the cavalry, equipped with lances and breastplates, the somewhat more modern infantry, and the artillery. Oddly enough, the name of *Allah* was engraved in the riders' helmets. These came from a Mohammedan army which was said to have once moved against Lhasa. A terrible snowstorm surprised them and froze them all to death. Their weapons and armor were later brought into the

capital and displayed there in an annual parade. It was probably believed that the helmets would offer protection in the battle against the Mohammedans — the arch-enemy from the *Kalachakra Tantra* — since they would not dare to fire at the holy name of their supreme god.

This army of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, to a large part composed of serfs, was more or less picturesque, which naturally did their warlike, “unBuddhist” performance no harm. Yet one did not just fight with weapons in the hand but also operated magically. During the “Great Prayer Festival” for example *tormas* (dough figures) of the cavalry and the infantry were thrown into a fire so as to do harm to the enemies of the land through this fire magic. Every single sacrificial offering was supposed to later “function [like a] bomb” in reality (Chö-Yang, vol. 1 no. 2, 1987, p. 93). [3]

Of even greater martial pomposity than the Tibetan army was the so-called “monks’ police”. Heinrich Harrer (the “best friend of the Dalai Lama”) describes the “dark fellows” who were responsible for law and order in Lhasa at the beginning of the fifties in the following words: “The figures in the red habits are not always gentle and learned brethren. The majority are coarse and unfeeling fellows for whom the whip of discipline cannot be strong enough. ... They tie a red band around their naked arm and blacken their faces with soot so as to appear really frightening. They have a huge key tucked into their belts which can serve as a knuckleduster or a throwing weapon as required. It is not rare for them to also carry a sharp cobblers’ knife hidden in their pocket. Many of them are notorious fighters; even their impudent stride seems provocative; their readiness to attack is well known, and one avoids aggravating them” (Harrer, 1984, pp. 216-217).

Just like the police from Lhasa, the officers and other ranks of the Tibetan armed forces tended towards excessive corruption and of a night committed all manner of crimes. Like the western mafia they demanded protection money from businesses and threatened to attack life and limb if not paid. This was certainly not the intention of their supreme military commander, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, who still in his last will dreamed of “efficient and well-equipped troops ... as a sure deterrent against any adversaries” (Michael, 1982, p. 173).

Since the once mighty Tibet has been unable to develop itself into a great military power again since the fall of the Yarlung dynasty (in the ninth century), the country all but vibrates with bottled-up military energy. This has been confirmed by a number of western travelers. The British friend of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Charles Bell, was also forced to ascertain “that the martial energy of the Tibetans, though sapped by Buddhism, has not even now been destroyed. Should Buddhism ever go, the combative spirit will return” (Bell, 1994, p. 77). Bell overlooks here that this spirit is already a part of tantric practice, yet he seems to have an inkling of this when he continues as follows: “Indeed, Tibet expects later to fight for her religion. You can sometimes read in Tibetan books about the country called *Shambhala* ... a mystical country which, three or four centuries hence, will be the scene of hostilities, fierce and decisive, between Buddhists and Muhammadans” (Bell, 1994, p. 77). It is a Tibetan saying that “for The Buddha faced by foemen his disciples don their armor” (Bell, 1994, p. 191).

## The historical distortion of the “peaceful” Tibetans

The impression, widely distributed in the West, of ancient Tibet as a peaceful country is thus a deliberate and gross misrepresentation of history. Even official texts from the Tibetan tradition are seldom tempted to such pacifist exaggerations as is the Dalai Lama today, above all since being awarded the Nobel peace prize. The local historians knew full well about the fighting spirit and aggressive potential which slumbered in the Tibetan soul. They did not deny that the lamas often enough had to use violence in their own interests. The *Mani Kambum*, a book about the mythic history of Tibet from the 13th century, reported already that its inhabitants had inherited faith, wisdom, and goodness from their father, *Avalokiteshvara*, and from their mother, *Srinmo*, however, “pleasure in killing, bodily strength, and courage” (Stein, 1993, p. 37).

Lamaism’s evaluation of war is fundamentally positive and affirmative, as long as it involves the spread of Buddhism. (We shall later demonstrate this through many examples.) This in no sense implicates a discontinuity between historical reality and the Buddhist/pacifist doctrine. *Vajrayana* itself cultivates an aggressive, warlike behavior and indeed not just so as to overcome it through mental control. Wars are declared — as is usual among other religions as well — so as to proceed against the “enemies of the faith”. The state religion of the Land of Snows (*Vajrayana*) has always been essentially warlike, and a Buddhist Tantric reaches for his weapon not just in desperation, but also so as to conquer and to eliminate opponents. The virtues of a soldier — courage, self-sacrifice, bravery, honor, endurance, cunning, even fury, hate, and mercilessness — are likewise counted among the spiritual disciplines of Buddhist Tantrism.

Yet the lamas do not conduct “wars” on real battlefields alone. Many more battles are fought in the imagination. Anyone can ascertain this, even if they only cast a fleeting glance over the aggressive tantric iconography. Likewise, all (!) tantras apply military language to religious events and describe the struggle of the spirit against its besmirchment as a “war”. Along the path to enlightenment it is fought, beaten, pierced through, burned up, cut to pieces, chained, decapitated, defeated, destroyed, won, and exulted. The Buddhas take to the battlefield of *samsara* (our so-called world of illusion) as “victors”, “heroes”, “fighters”, “generals”, and “army commanders”.

Accordingly, Tibetan society has always revered the “figure of the warrior” alongside the “figure of the saint” (Buddha, Bodhisattva, or tulku) as their supreme archetype. From the half mythical kings of the 7th century to the modern guerilla leaders of the *Khampas*, the “fighting hero” is the heroic archetype adopted even today by thousands of youths and young men in Tibet and in exile. Already from the beginnings of Tibetan history on the border between “warrior” and “saint” has been blurred. A good “pupil” of the *Vajrayana* and a *Shambhala* “warrior” are still identical today.

## Is the Fourteenth Dalai Lama the “greatest living prince of peace”?

Since being awarded the Nobel peace prize (in 1989) the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has been celebrated in the western press as the “greatest living prince of peace”. With a self-confident and kindly smile he accepts this appellation and modestly reminds his audience what an enormous debt he owes to Mahatma Gandhi. Armed with the latter’s doctrine of nonviolence (*ahimsa*), there is no topic which His Holiness speaks of more often or with more emotion than that of “outer” and “inner” peace. “For me, violence cannot possibly be the way” is in recent years the phrase most often heard upon his lips (Levenson, 1992, p. 349).

*Ahimsa* (the rejection of all violence) was originally not a Buddhist value, especially not in the context of the tantras. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama, for example, when Gandhi encouraged him in a letter to join in with his idea, did not at all know where he was at with the term. Be that as it may — the future Tibet, freed from the Chinese yoke, is in the words of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama supposed to be transformed into a “peace and *ahimsa* zone”. There will be no army, no weapons, above all no nuclear warheads any more in the Land of Snows after its liberation. Further, the *Kundun* considers the trade in military hardware to be something just as irresponsible as the aggressive and uncontrolled temper of an individual. In an exemplary fashion he invites the Israelis and the Palestinians to lay down their weapons. He proclaims the demilitarization of the entire planet as a desirable final goal.

### War toys

Surprisingly, in opposition to this constantly publicly demonstrated basic pacifist attitude there stands a particular fascination for the art of warfare which captivated His Holiness whilst still a child. In Martin Scorsese’s film (*Kundun*) about the life of the Dalai Lama, this fondness is graphically depicted in a short scene. The child god-king is playing with some tin soldiers. Suddenly, with a sweep of his hand he knocks them aside and cries out emphatically, “I want power!”. This film anecdote could well be more realistic than the widespread and pious legend in which the young god-king had these tin soldiers melted down and then recast as toy monks.

As an adolescent the *Kundun* enjoyed target practice with an air gun he inherited from his predecessor and is still proud of being a good shot. Without embarrassment he reveals in his autobiography that he owns an air pistol and that he practices target shooting with it. One day he killed a hornet which was plundering a wasp’s nest. “A protector of the unprotected!” was the reverential comment of one of his biographers on this piece of sharp shooting (Hicks and Chögyam, 1985, p. 197).

The *Kundun*’s openly admitted weakness for war literature and war films has surprised not a few of his admirers. As a youth he enthused over English military books. They provided him with the images from which to construct models of fighter planes, ships, and tanks. Later he had passages from them translated into Tibetan. Towards the end of the forties the former member of the Nazi

SS, Heinrich Harrer, had to recount for him the only recently played out events of the second world war. There has been little change in this passion for military objects since his youth. As late as 1997 the *Kundun* admitted his enthusiasm for uniforms in an interview: “but [they] are also very attractive. ... Every button on the jacket shines so prettily. And then the belt. The insignia” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin*, March 21, 1997, p. 79). On a visit to Germany in 1998 the Nobel peace prize winner told how “even as a child I liked looking at illustrated books from my predecessor’s library, especially about the First World War. I loved all the instruments, the weapons and the tanks, the airplanes, the fantastic battleships and submarines. Later I asked for books about World War II. When I visited China in 1954 I knew more about it than the Chinese did” (*Zeitmagazin*, no. 44, October 22, 1998, p. 24). Asked (again in Germany) about his television viewing habits, he chatted about his preference for war films: “Earlier though, I had a favorite program. You won’t believe me! ‘M.A.S.H.’ — the US series about the Vietnam War. Very funny ... (laughs) (*Focus* 44/1998, p. 272).

When he was visiting Normandy in 1986, he unexpectedly and in complete contradiction to the planned schedule expressed the wish to see the Allied bridgehead from the Second World War. “I also wanted to see the weapons, these mighty cannon and all these rifles which painfully moved me. In the vicinity of these machines, these weapons, and this sand I felt and shared the emotions of those who were there then ...” (Levenson, 1992, p. 291). Despite such pious affirmations of compassion with the victims of battle, here too his childlike enthusiasm for the machinery of war can be heard. Or is it only a mood of the “time god”, whose enthusiasm for various systems of weaponry is — as we have already reported — expressed at such length in the *Kalachakra Tantra*?

Even if such martial preferences and play may normally be harmless, we must never forget that, unlike an ordinary person, the Dalai Lama represents a symbolic figure. In the meantime, all the pious aspects which are otherwise known of the childhood and life of the god-king are, thanks to a powerful film propaganda, considered to be a wonderful omen and the indicators of a cosmic plan. Is it then not logically consistent to also interpret his fascination for the military milieu as a sign which flags the aggressive potential of his religion?

### ***Reting Rinpoche and the murder of the Dalai Lama’s father***

The early life of the young Dalai Lama was anything but peaceful. In the forties his milieu was caught up in violent and bloody clashes which could in no way be blamed solely on the Chinese. Although the then regent, the discoverer and first teacher of the god-king, Reting Rinpoche, had transferred the business of state to his successor, Taktra Rinpoche, in 1941, he later wanted to regain the power he had lost. Thus, from 1945 on it came to ever more serious discordances between the Tibetan government and the ex-regent. Uncouth and feared for his escapades countrywide, the Dalai Lama’s father, Choekyong Tsering, counted among the latter’s faithful followers. In 1947 he died suddenly at the age of 47 during a meal. It is not just Gyalo Thondup, one of the *Kundun*’s brothers, who is convinced that he was poisoned by someone from government circles (Craig, 1997, p. 120).

Shortly after the poisoning, Reting Rinpoche decided to stage an open rebellion. His followers attempted to assassinate the regent, Taktra, and approached the Chinese about weapons and munitions. But they were soon overpowered by Tibetan government troops, who took captive the ex-regent. Monks from the Sera monastery rushed to his aid. First of all they murdered their abbot, a Taktra supporter. Then, under the leadership of an 18-year-old lama, Tsenya Rinpoche, who had been recognized as the incarnation of a wrathful tutelary deity (*dharmapala*) and was referred to by his fellow monks as a “war leader”, they stormed off to Lhasa in order to free Reting Rinpoche. But this revolt also collapsed under the artillery fire of the government troops. At least 200 Sera monks lost their lives in this monastic “civil war”. Reting’s residence was razed to the ground.

Soon afterwards he was charged with treason, found guilty, and thrown into the notorious Potala dungeons. He is said to have been cruelly tortured and later strangled. According to other reports he was poisoned (Goldstein, 1989, p. 513). A high-ranking official who was said to have sympathized with the rebels had his eyeballs squeezed out. Just how cruel and tormenting the atmosphere of this time has been described later by a Tibetan refugee (!): “Rivalry, in-fighting, corruption, nepotism, it was decadent and horrible. Everything was a matter of show, ceremonial, jockeying for position” (quoted by Craig, 1997, p. 123).

### **Tibetan guerrillas and the CIA**

In the fifties and with the support of the USA, a guerilla army was developed in Tibet which over many years undertook military action against the Chinese occupation forces. A broad scale anti-Communist offensive was planned together with Taiwanese special units and indirect support from the Indian secret service. At the head of the rebellion stood the proud and “cruel” *Khampas*. These nomads had been feared as brigands for centuries, so that the word *Khampa* in Tibet is a synonym for *robber*. In the mid-fifties the American secret service (CIA) had brought several groups of the wild tribe to Taiwan via eastern Pakistan and later to Camp Hale in the USA. There they received training in guerilla tactics. Afterwards the majority of them were dropped back into Tibet with parachutes. Some of them made contact with the government in Lhasa at that stage. Others did not shy away from their traditional trade of robbery and became a real nuisance for the rural population whom they were actually supposed to liberate from the Chinese and not drive into further misery through pillaging.

Despite the Dalai Lama’s constant affirmations, still repeated today, that his flight took place without any external influence, it was in fact played out months in advance in Washington by high military officials. Everything went as planned. In 1959, the American-trained guerillas collected His Holiness from his summer residence (in Lhasa). During the long trek to the Indian border the underground fighters were in constant radio contact with the Americans and were supplied with food and equipment by aircraft. We learn from an “initiate” that “this fantastic escape and its major significance have been buried in the lore of the CIA as one of the successes that are not talked

about. The Dalai Lama would never have been saved without the CIA” (Grunfeld, 1996, pp. 155-156).

In addition, the Chinese were not particularly interested in pursuing the refugees since they believed they would be better able to deal with the rebellion in Tibet if the *Kundun* was out of the country. Mao Zedong is thus said to have personally approved of the flight of the Dalai Lama after the fact (*Tibetan Review*, January 1995, p. 10). Yes — Beijing was convinced for months after the exodus that His Holiness had been kidnapped by the Khampas.

In fact, the Chinese had every reason to make such an assumption, as becomes apparent from a piece of correspondence between the *Kundun* and the Chinese military commander of Lhasa, General Tan Guansan. Only a few days before the god-king was able to flee the town, he had turned to the General with the most urgent appeal to protect him from the “reactionary, evil elements” who “are carrying out activities endangering me under the pretext of protecting my safety” (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 135). What he meant by these “evil elements” were hundreds of Tibetans who had surrounded his summer palace day and night to cheer him on. This crowd was called upon a number of times by the Dalai Lama’s political staff to abandon their “siege” since it was provoking the Chinese and there was a real danger that they would answer with artillery fire at the illegal rally and in so doing quite possibly threaten the life of the *Kundun*. But the people nevertheless remained, on the pretext of caring for the security of their “god-king”. Thereupon the latter wrote the above request to General Tan Guansan. But in a furtive maneuver he was secretly collected by a group of Khampas and brought to the Indian border unharmed.

The flight, organized by the CIA and tolerated by the Chinese, was later mythologized by the western press and the Dalai Lama himself into a divine exodus. There was mysterious talk of a “mystic cloud” which was supposed to have veiled the column of refugees during the long trek to India and protected them from the view of and attack by the Chinese enemy. The CIA airplanes which gave the refugees air cover and provided them with supplies of food became Chinese “reconnaissance” flights which circled above the fleeing god-king but, thanks to wondrous providence and the “mystic cloud”, were unable to discern anything.

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[www.naatanet.org/shadowcircus/shang4.html](http://www.naatanet.org/shadowcircus/shang4.html): “Resistance fighters escorted the Dalai Lama through guerrilla-held territory. The two CIA-trained men met up with the escape party halfway on their journey and accompanied them to the Indian border, keeping the Americans updated about their progress. The Dalai Lama’s escape triggered a massive military operation by the Chinese who brutally quelled the revolt in Lhasa and went on the offensive against the resistance bases in southern Tibet. The guerrillas suffered major setbacks. Andrug Gampo Tashi and the remainder of his force had no choice but to join the exodus of Tibetans who were streaming across the Himalaya, following their leader into exile.” (From the Film *The Shadow Circus – The CIA in Tibet*)

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Even if the *Kundun* has for years publicly distanced himself from the Tibetan guerillas, he always showed great sympathy in the community of Tibetans in exile for “his” underground fighters. His Holiness has also valued the services of his guerillas in exile and on a number of occasions since 1959 publicly stood by them. “Despite my belief”, he says in his autobiography published in 1964 “I much admire their courage and their determination to take on the fierce struggle which they began for our freedom, our culture, and religion. I thank them for their strength and their daring, and also personally for the protection which they gave me. ... Hence I could not honorably give them the advice to avoid violence. In order to fight they had sacrificed their homes and all the comforts and advantages of a peaceful life. Now they could not see any alternative to continuing to struggle and I had nothing to oppose that with” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1964, p. 190). In the new edition of the autobiography of the in the meantime winner of the Nobel peace prize which appeared in 1990 (*Freedom in Exile*), this passage is no longer mentioned. It is too obvious a contradiction of the current image of the *Kundun* as “the supreme prince of peace of the century”.

Another statement, which can be read in the biography, *The Last Dalai Lama* by Michael Harris Goodman, shows even more clearly the god-king's two-facedness concerning nonviolence: “In [the message]”, he is supposed to have said, “I called the guerillas 'reactionaries', stated that the Tibetan people should not support them. At the same time the delegation was instructed to tell the guerillas to keep on fighting. We spoke in two tongues, the official and the unofficial. Officially we regarded their act as rebellion, and unofficially we regard them as heroes and told them so” (Goodman, 1986, p. 271).

Already in exile, at the beginning of the sixties the Dalai Lama bestowed on a distinguished rebel leader the same honors which normally accompany an appointment to the rank of general (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 142). At the same time a number of volunteer exile Tibetans flew to the USA in order to once again be trained in guerilla warfare under the supervision of the CIA. The action was mediated by Gyalo Thondup, a elder brother of the Dalai Lama.

Parallel to this, together with the Indian secret service Thondup established the *Special Frontier Force* (SFF) in 1962 with exile Tibetan recruits, a powerful and well-equipped mountain army which could be dropped into Tibet by parachute at any moment. It had 10,500 men under arms and its own officer corps. At the same time the “National Volunteer Defence Army” was founded. It can hardly be assumed that the *Kundun* was not very well informed about these ambitious military projects of his brother. Nonetheless it continues to be officially denied up to the present day. His Holiness is also not supposed to have known anything about the \$1.7 million which the CIA provided annually to the Tibetans for military activities in the sixties.

The armed struggle of the Tibetans was prepared for at the highest political levels, primarily in Washington, Delhi, and Taipei. The only reason it was not brought into action was that at the start of the seventies Richard Nixon began with his pro-China politics and cancelled all military support

for the Tibetans. But without American support the outlook for a guerilla war was completely hopeless, and from this point on the Dalai Lama publicly distanced himself from any use of violence.

Military action now no longer had any chance of success and in Dharamsala the work began of effectively reformulating the history of the Tibetan guerillas „in that one encouraged the fiction that the popular resistance had been nonviolent”, as Jamyan Norbu writes, before continuing, Tibetan officials, Buddhist followers, Western supporters and intellectuals [...] regard the resistance movement as an embarrassment [...] because it somehow detracts from the preferred peace-loving image of Tibet as a *Shangri-La*” (Huber, 2001, p. 369).

The Nobel peace prize winner’s statements on the armed struggle of the Tibetans are most contradictory and were in the past more oriented to the political situation and constellations of power than fundamental principles. At times the Dalai Lama expressed the view that “it is quite appropriate to fight for a just cause and even to kill” (Levenson, 1992, p. 135). In an interview in 1980 he answered the question of whether violence and religion did not exclude one another as follows: „They can be combined. It depends on the motivation and the result. With good motivation and result, and if under the circumstances there is no other alternative, then violence is permissible” (Avedon, 1980, p. 34).

Only since 1989, after he was awarded the Nobel peace prize, has the god-king cultivated an exclusively pacifist retrospective on the violent history of his country. A few years ago one still heard from His Holiness that there was much which was aggressive in the Tibet of old, about which one could not exactly be happy. From 1989 on, the stereotypical message is that there had only been “peace and happiness” in the Land of Snows’ past. [4] Earlier, the *Kundun* had stated that “the Tibetans are predisposed to be fairly aggressive and warlike” and could only be tamed by Buddhism (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 18). Today, we read from the same author that “The Tibetan people are of an upright, gentle, and friendly nature” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993b, p. 34), whilst at the same time the Indian press describes Tibetan youths in Dharamsala as “militant”, “violent”, “impatient” and “restless” (*Tibetan Review*, May 1991, p. 19). In 1994 a Tibetan youth stabbed a young Indian which led to violence breaking out against the exile Tibetan community.

### **Marching music and terror**

Are the Tibetans a peaceful people? In the camp of the Tibetans in exile a somewhat different tone is struck than at the western press conferences of the Dalai Lama. Anyone who has ever participated in the official festivities of the Tibetan national holiday (March 10) in Dharamsala and seen the uniformed groups of youths parading past the Lion Throne of His Holiness, anyone who has been able to experience the ceremonies of the flag and hear the war and fighting songs sung there, must have gained the impression that this was a military parade and definitely not a peace festival of gentle monks. Admittedly, the *Kundun* also always introduces these festivities with a profession of nonviolence, but after his speech — in the words of the historian, Christiaan Klieger

— „the tone of the event turns decidedly martial” (Klieger, 1991, p. 62). The Khampa warriors with whom we are already familiar appear in ancient leopard skin uniforms. Guards of honor salute the Tibetan flag, on which the two snow lions symbolize the twin pillars of church and state. Enthusiastically sounds the tune of “Song of the Uprising People” (*Long shog*), which was composed as a military march. Its two final verses go as follows:

Tibet follows its true leader ...

The Great Protector, His Holiness the Dalai Lama,

Accepted by Tibetans in and out.

The red-handed butcher – enemy,

The imperialistic Red Chinese,

Will surely be kicked out of Tibet.

Rise up, all patriots!

(Klieger, 1991, p. 63)

Such warlike marching songs may be of great importance for the formation of the poorly developed Tibetan national consciousness — they are also sung with the appropriate gusto by all present — but they have absolutely nothing to do with the much invoked principle of *ahimsa*. In contrast, they reify the concept of an enemy and glorify His Holiness (“the greatest living apostle of peace”) as the “supreme military commander”.

The warlike tendencies among the Tibetans in exile are not exhausted by marching music and ceremonial displays during the national holiday celebrations. Already at the start of the sixties a small group of militants resolved “that the time had come to employ terrorism in the fight for Tibet” (Avedon, 1985, p. 146). In 1998, at a press conference in Dharamsala, Kuncho Tender, a militant who spent 20 years in the Tibetan underground, argued for a renaissance of the guerilla movement in Tibet “which would kill one Chinese after another until the country [is] free” (Associated Press, Dharamsala, May 28, 1998).

Discussion about “terror as an instrument of politics” is also very current once more among radical Tibetan underground groups in the occupied Land of Snows, for example the *Tiger-Leopard Youth Organization*: „Our non\_violent methods”, it says in a letter from this organization to the United Nations General Secretary, „have been taken as a sign of weakness. We are determined to regain our freedom, and the recent UN vote [in which a criticism of China was rejected] clearly shows us

that without bloodshed, sabotage, and aggressive acts we will not gain publicity, sympathy and support. [...] So why should we not follow the destructive path?" (Schwartz, 1994, p. 224). Further the young patriots affirm that they are aware that these methods disagree with the politics of the Dalai Lama but no other option remained open to them.

Another underground organization from eastern Tibet calls itself the „Volunteer Army to Defend Buddhism" (Huber, 2001, p. 363). Calling themselves this shows that this group does not see the "destructive path" to liberation as being in contradiction to their religion. In contrast, an urgent prayer with which the terrible protective gods of the country are invoked and incited against the Chinese enemy counts as part of the daily work of the underground. In 1996 there were three bomb attacks in Lhasa.

Such activities cannot harm the *Kundun* at all, then by publicly criticizing them he furthers his image as an "apostle of peace". This need not prevent him from secretly encouraging the "armed groups" as he already did with the Khampas. Even if this contradicts his pacifist professions, it does not contradict the principles of Tantric Buddhism.

In the meantime, discussions about Buddhism and the military are becoming an increasingly popular topic in Buddhist circles in the West. For example, there was an article in the journal *Tricycle* in 1996 with the title *Apology of a Buddhist Soldier*, in which the author gathered together arguments which are supposed to legitimate a "just" war for a Buddhist (*Tricycle*, V (3), p. 71). It is of course all very ethical, with reference to, among others, the Buddhist Emperor Ashoka (273–226 B.C.E.) who united India into a peaceful realm. Ashoka was, however, a great and cruel military commander who conducted the bloodiest of campaigns before he achieved power,. Some Buddhist traditions revere him without inhibition as a merciless war hero. "Thus the need to kill", P. J. Tambiah writes in reference to the Emperor, "before becoming a great king who can rule righteously is a Buddhist root dilemma. — Kings must be good killers before they can turn to piety and good works" (Tambiah, 1976, pp. 50, 522).

### **Political calculation and the Buddhist message of peace**

It is not the task of our analysis to make a personal choice between "armed rebellion" and the "*ahimsa* principle" or to answer the question whether violent action in Tibet is morally justified and makes sense in terms of national politics. We also do not want -as the Chinese attempt to do — to expose the *Kundun* as no more than a fanatical warmonger in sheep's clothing. Perhaps, by and large he is *personally* a peace-loving person, but without doubt he represents a culture which has from its very origins been warlike and which does not even think of admitting to its violent past, let alone reappraising it.

Instead, Dharamsala and the current Dalai Lama make a constant propaganda project of presenting Tibetan Buddhism and the history of Tibet to the world public as a storehouse of eternal teachings about nonviolence and peace. There is thus a refusal to accept that the *Kundun* first acquired his pacifist ideas (e.g., under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi) after his flight; instead it is implied that they are drawn from the inexhaustible inheritance of a many hundred year old tradition and history. Even the aggressive “Great Fifth” and the “Great Thirteenth” with his strong interest in military matters now appear as the precursors of the current “Buddhism of peace”. On the basis of this distortion, the current Dalai Lama is able to fully identify with his fifth incarnation without having to mention his warlike and Machiavellian power politics and murderous magic: “By holding the position of the Fifth Dalai Lama I am supposed to follow what he did, this is the reason I have to interfere”, the *Kundun* explained in 1997 (HPI 006). Thus there is much which speaks for the pacifism of the Dalai Lama being nothing more than a calculated political move and never having been the expression of a principle. Jamyang Norbu, co-director of the Tibetan cultural institute, thus accuses his “revered leader” (the *Kundun*) and his exile Tibetan politicians of fostering the formation of the western myth of the good and peaceful Tibet of old. At no stage in history have the Tibetans been particularly pacifist — the terrible fighting out of the conflicts between individual monasteries proves this, as well as the bloody resistance to the occupation in the fifties. “The government in exile”, says Norbu, “capitalizes upon the western clichés, hampers a demythologization, a critical examination of its own history” (*Spiegel*, 16/1998).

There is also absolutely no intention of doing this. For the Dalai Lama the fundamental orientation to be adopted is dependent upon what is favorable in the prevailing power-political situation. Thus a immediate *volte-face* to a fighting lineage is thoroughly laid out in his system. Neither religious, nor ideological, and definitely not historical incarnational obstacles stand in the way of a possible decision to go to war. In contrast, the Tibetan war gods have been waiting for centuries to strike out and re-conquer their former extended empire. Every higher tantra includes a call to battle against the “enemies of the faith”. In any event, the *Kalachakra* ritual and the ideology at work behind it are to be understood as a declaration of war on the non-Buddhist world. Important members of the Tibetan clergy have already reserved their places in the great doomsday army of *Shambhala*. „Many of them already know the names and ranks they will have.” (Bernbaum, 1980, p. 29, 30).

When the political circumstances are ripe the “simple monk” from Dharamsala will have to set aside his personal pacifist tendencies and, as the embodied *Kalachakra* deity, will hardly shrink from summoning *Begtse* the god of slaughter or from himself appearing in the guise of a *heruka*. “The wrathful goddesses and the enraged gods are there,” we learn from his own mouth (before he was awarded the Nobel peace prize), “in order to demonstrate that one can grasp the use of violence as a method; it is an effective instrument, but it can never ever be a purpose” (Levenson, 1992, p. 284). There is no noteworthy political leader in the violent history of humankind who would have thought otherwise. Even for dictators like Adolf Hitler or Joseph Stalin violence was never an end in itself, but rather an “effective instrument” for the attainment of “honorable” goals.

Even some western voices these days no longer shrink from drawing attention to the dangerous and violent aspects of the figure of the *Kundun* in fascination: “This man has something of a

pouncing wild cat, a snow leopard imbued with freedom and loneliness which no cage could hold back”, his biographer, Claude B. Levenson, has written (Levenson, 1992, p. 160).

### **“Buddha has smiled”: The Dalai Lama and the Indian atomic tests of 1998**

In the opinion of the Indian military as well, the religion of the Buddha appears to be not so pacifist as it is presented to us here in the West. Why else would the first Indian nuclear weapons tests (in 1974) have been referred to under the secret code of “The Lord Buddha has smiled!”? Why were the spectacular tests in 1998 deliberately launched on the birthday of the Gautama Buddha? (*Focus*, 21/1998, p. 297; *Spiegel*, 21/1998, p. 162). In fact the sole “living Buddha” at this time, the Dalai Lama, has a profound interest in the Indian atomic tests. For him (“as the smiling third party”) a confrontation between the two Asian giants (China and India) would be of great political advantage. It was thus only logical that the “god-king” from Tibet gave the demonstration of a nuclear capability by his host country the Buddhist blessing. While the whole world, especially the heads of state of the G8 countries gathered at the time in Birmingham, protested sharply (President Bill Clinton spoke of “a terrible mistake”) the Tibetan “Nobel peace prize winner” approved of the Indian bomb. “India should not”, said the Dalai Lama “be pressured by developed nations to get rid of nuclear weapons. ... It should have the same access to nuclear weapons as developed countries. ... The assumption of the concept that few nations are ok to possess nuclear weapons and the rest of the world should not — that's undemocratic” [5] (Associated Press, May 13, 1998). But the disastrous implication of such a statement is that any nation ought to be able to acquire nuclear weapons simply because other countries also possess them. It should be obvious that the Indian public was enthusiastic about the *Kundun's* approbation. “If a man of peace like Dalai Lama can approve of India's nuclear position,” one Mamata Shah wrote on the Internet, “Gandhi too would have no hesitation in approving it” (Nospamlchow, Newsgroup 8).

In addition, the whole nuclear display between India and Pakistan symbolically heralds the *Shambhala* war prophesied in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. The bomb of the *smiling Buddha* was “the signal for the Pakistanis to forcefully pursue the development of the *Islamic bomb*” and to test it (*Spiegel*, 21/1998) — a foretaste of what awaits us when (according to the *Shambhala myth*) Buddhists and Moslems face each other in the final battle.

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Dalai Lama praises US approach to bombing Afghanistan: "At the same time, as a quiet fellow, I am amazed and admire that, at this moment, unlike First World War, Second World, Korean War and Vietnam War, I think the American side is very, very carefully selecting targets, taking maximum precautions about the civilian casualties." - "I think this is a sign of more civilization," said the Dalai Lama. He warned, however, that "bombing can eliminate only physical things, not thoughts or emotions. Talk and reasoning is the only long-term solution." (Strasbourg, Oct 24 – AFP)

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### Footnotes:

[1] How current and far reaching such activities by “vengeful lamas” can be is shown by the *Shugden* affair described above in which the “protective god” (*Dorje Shugden*) has succeeded in overshadowing the public image of the Dalai Lama.

[2] During a cult ceremony in Kongpo in 1989, the “gods” *Amitabha*, *Avalokiteshvara*, and *Padmasambhava* appeared. Ever more mediums are emerging, through whom the *dharmapalas* (the tutelary deities) speak and announce the liberation from the Chinese yoke (Schwartz, 1994, p. 227).

[3] In 1954, Rudolf A. Stein took part in a martial ceremony in Sikkim, at which various war gods were invoked. There was one “recitation to incite the sword” and another for the rifle. The text ended with an “incitement” of the planet *Rahu* (Stein, 1993, p. 247). Such ceremonies were also performed in the Tibet of old.

[4] Only since 1997, under the influence of the *Shugden* affair has a self critical position begun to emerge. This too — as we shall later show — is purely tactically motivated.

[5] This statement stands, even if two days later the Dalai Lama, certainly under pressure from the West, stressed that he was in favor of a general disarmament. The news agency CND even reversed the statement by His Holiness into its opposite and reported on May 20 that the “Dalai Lama said on Tuesday that he was disappointed by India's nuclear test and backed China's call to ban all nuclear weapons” (CND, May 20, 1998). The unrestricted opportunism of the god-king, of which we still have numerous examples to mention, easily allows one to presume that he made both statements (both for and against India).

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## 10. THE SPEARHEAD OF THE SHAMBHALA WAR

War in the Tibet of old on a number of occasions meant the military intervention of various Mongolian tribes into the internal affairs of the country. Over the course of time a deep cultural connection with the warlike nomads from the north developed which ultimately led to a complete Buddhization of Mongolia. Today this is interpreted by Buddhist “historians” as a pacification of the country and its inhabitants. But let us examine more closely some prominent events in the history of Central Asia under Buddhist control.

### Genghis Khan as a Bodhisattva

The greatest conqueror of all humankind, at least as far as the expansion of the territory under his control is concerned, was Genghis Khan (1167–1227). He united the peoples of the Mongolian steppes in Asia and from them formed a horseback army which struck fear into the hearts of Europe and China just as much as it did in the Islamic states. His way of conducting warfare was for the times extremely modern. The preparations for an offensive usually took several years. He had the strengths and weaknesses of his opponents studied in detail. This was achieved by among other things a cleverly constructed network of spies and agents. His notorious cavalry was neither chaotic nor wild, nor as large as it was often said to be by the peoples that he conquered. In contrast, they were distinguished by strict discipline, had the absolutely best equipment, and were courageous, extremely effective, and usually outnumbered by their enemies. The longer the preparations for war were, the more rapidly the battles were decided, and that with a merciless cruelty. Women and children found just as little pity as the aged and the sick. If a city opposed the great Khan, every living creature within it had to be exterminated, even the animals — the dogs and rats were executed. Yet for those who submitted to him, he became a redeemer, God-man, and prince of peace. To this day the Mongolians have not forgotten that the man who conquered and ruled the world was of their blood.

Tactically at least, in wanting to expand into Mongolia Tibetan Lamaism did well to declare Genghis Khan, revered as divine, to be one of their own. It stood in the way of this move that the world conqueror was no follower of the Buddhist teachings and trusted only in himself, or in the shamanist religious practices of his ancestors. There are even serious indications that he felt attracted to monotheistic ideas in order to be able to legitimate his unique global dominion.

Yet through an appeal to their ADI BUDDHA system the lamas could readily match their monotheistic competitors. According to legend a contest between the religions did also take place before the ruler’s throne, which from the Tibetan viewpoint was won by the Buddhists. The same story is recounted by the Mohammedans, yet ends with the “ruler of the world” having decided in favor of the Teachings of the Prophet. In comparison, the proverbial cruelty of the Mongolian khan

was no obstacle to his fabricated “Buddhization”, since he could without further ado be integrated into the tantric system as the fearful aspect of a Buddha (a *heruka*) or as a bloodthirsty *dharmapala* (tutelary god). Thus more and more stories were invented which portrayed him as a representative of the Holy Doctrine (the *dharma*).

Among other things, Mongolian lamas constructed an ancestry which traced back to a Buddhist Indian law-king and put this in place of the zoomorphic legend common among the shamans that Genghis Khan was the son of a wolf and a deer. Another story tells of how he was descended from a royal Tibetan family. It is firmly believed that he was in correspondence with a great abbot of the Sakyapa sect and had asked him for spiritual protection. The following sentence stands in a forged letter in which the Mongol addresses the Tibetan hierarch: “Holy one! Well did I want to summon you; but because my worldly business is still incomplete, I have not summoned you. I trust you from here, protect me from there” (Schulemann, 1958, p. 89). A further document “from his hand” is supposed to have freed the order from paying taxes. In the struggle against the Chinese, Genghis Khan — it is reported — prayed to ADI BUDDHA.

### **The Buddhization of Mongolia**

But it was only after the death of the Great Khan that the missionary lamas succeeded in converting the Mongolian tribes to Buddhism, even if this was a process which stretched out over four centuries. (Incidentally, this was definitely not true for all, then a number took up the Islamic faith.) Various smaller contacts aside, the voyage of the Sakya, Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen, to the court of the nomad ruler Godän Khan (in 1244), stands at the outset of the conversion project, which ultimately brought all of northern Mongolia under Buddhist influence. The great abbot, already very advanced in years, convinced the Mongolians of the power of his religion by healing Ugedai’s son of a serious illness. The records celebrate their subsequent conversion as a triumph of civilization over barbarism.

Some 40 years later (1279), there followed a meeting between Chögyel Phagpa, likewise a Tibetan great abbot of the Sakyapa lineage, and Kublai Khan, the Mongolian conqueror of China and the founder of the Yuan dynasty. At these talks topics which concerned the political situation of Tibet were also discussed. The adroit hierarch from the Land of Snows succeeded in persuading the Emperor to grant him the title of “King of the Great and Valuable Law” and thus a measure of worldly authority over the not yet united Tibet. In return, the Phagpa lama initiated the Emperor into the *Hevajra Tantra*.

Three hundred years later (in 1578), the Gelugpa abbot, Gyalwa Sonam Gyatso, met with Althan Khan and received from him the fateful name of “Dalai Lama”. At the time he was only the spiritual ruler and in turn gave the Mongolian prince the title of the “Thousand-Golden-Wheel turning World Ruler”. From 1637 on the cooperation between the “Great Fifth” and Gushri Khan began. By the beginning of the 18th century at the latest, the Buddhization of Mongolia was complete and the country lay firmly in the hand of the Yellow Church.

But it would be wrong to believe that the conversion of the Mongolian rulers had led to a fundamental rejection of the warlike politics of the tribes. It is true that it was at times a moderating influence. For instance, the Third Dalai Lama had demanded that women and slaves no longer be slaughtered as sacrificial offerings during the ancient memorial services for the deceased princes of the steppe. But it would fill pages if we were to report on the cruelty and mercilessness of the “Buddhist” Khans. As long as it concerned the combating of “enemies of the faith”, the lamas were prepared to make any compromise regarding violence. Here the aggressive potential of the protective deities (the *dharmapala*) could be lived out in reality without limits. Yet to be fair one has to say that both elements, the pacification and the militarization developed in parallel, as is indeed readily possible in the paradoxical world of the tantric doctrines. It was not until the beginning of the 20th century that the proverbial fighting spirit of the Mongolians would once more really shine forth and then, as we shall see, combine with the martial ideology of the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

Before the Communists seized power in Mongolia in the twenties, more than a quarter of the male population were simple monks. The main contingent of lamas belonged to the Gelugpa order and thus at least officially obeyed the god-king from Lhasa. Real power, however, was exercised by the supreme *Khutuktu*, the Mongolian term for an incarnated Buddha being (in the Tibetan language: *Kundun*). At the beginning of his term in office his authority only extended to religious matters, then constitutionally the steppe land of Genghis Khan had become a province of China.

In the year 1911 there was a revolt and the “living Buddha”, Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, was proclaimed as the first head of state (*Bogd Khan*) of the autonomous Mongolian peoples. At the same time the country declared its independence. In the constitutional decree it said: “We have elevated the Bogd, radiant as the sun, myriad aged, as the Great Khan of Mongolia and his consort Tsagaan Dar as the mother of the nation” (Onon, 1989, p. 16). The great lama’s response included the following: “After accepting the elevation by all to become the Great Khan of the Mongolian Nation, I shall endlessly strive to spread the Buddhist religion as brightly as the lights of the million suns ...” (Onon, 1989, p. 18).

From now on, just as in Tibet a Buddhocracy with the incarnation of a god at its helm reigned in Mongolia. In 1912 an envoy of the Dalai Lama signed an agreement with the new head of state in which the two hierarchs each recognized the sovereignty of the other and their countries as autonomous states. The agreement was to be binding for all time and pronounced Tibetan Buddhism to be the sole state religion.

Jabtsundamba Khutuktu (1870–1924) was not a native Mongol, but was born in Lhasa as the son of a senior civil servant in the administration of the Dalai Lama. At the age of four his monastic life began in Khüre, the Mongolian capital at the time. Even as a younger man he led a dissolute life. He loved women and wine and justified his liberties with tantric arguments. This even made

its way into the Mongolian school books of the time, where we are able to read that there are two kinds of Buddhism: the “virtuous way” and the “mantra path”. Whoever follows the latter, “strolls, even without giving up the drinking of intoxicating beverages, marriage, or a worldly occupation, if he contemplates the essence of the Absolute, ... along the path of the great yoga master.” (Glaserapp, 1940, p. 24). When on his visit to Mongolia the Thirteenth Dalai Lama made malicious comments about dissoluteness of his brother-in-office, the Khutuktu is said to have foamed with rage and relations between the two sank to a new low.

The “living Buddha” from Mongolia was brutal to his subjects and not rarely overstepped the border to cruelty. He is accredited with numerous poisonings. It was not entirely without justification that he trusted nobody and suspected all. Nonetheless he possessed political acumen, an unbreakable ambition, and also a noteworthy audacity. Time and again he understood how, even in the most unfathomable situations, to seize political power for himself, and survived as head of state even after the Communists had conquered the country. His steadfastness in the face of the Chinese garnered him the respect of both ordinary people and the nobility.

There had barely been a peaceful period for him. Soon after its declaration of independence (in 1911) the country became a plaything of the most varied interests: the Chinese, Tsarist Russians, Communists, and numerous national and regional groupings attempted to gain control of the state. Blind and marked by the consumption of alcohol, the Khutuktu died in 1924. The Byelorussian, Ferdinand Ossendowski, who was fleeing through the country at the time attributes the following prophecy and vision to the Khutuktu, which, even if it is not historically authenticated, conjures up the spirit of an aggressive pan-Mongolism: “Near Karakorum and on the shores of Ubsa Nor I see the huge multi-colored camps. ... Above them I see the old banners of Jenghiz Khan, of the kings of Tibet, Siam, Afghanistan, and of Indian princes; the sacred signs of all the Lamaite Pontiffs; the coats of arms of the Khans of the Olets; and the simple signs of the north-Mongolian tribes. .... There is the roar and crackling of fire and the ferocious sound of battle. Who is leading these warriors who there beneath the reddened sky are shedding their own and others’ blood? ... I see ... a new great migration of peoples, the last march of the Mongols ...” (Ossendowski, 1924, pp. 315-316).

In the same year that Jabtsundamba Khutuktu died the “Mongolian Revolutionary People’s Party” (the Communists) seized complete governmental control, which they were to exercise for over 60 years. Nonetheless speculation about the new incarnation of the “living Buddha” continued. Here the Communists appealed to an old prediction according to which the eighth Khutuktu would be reborn as a *Shambhala* general and would thus no longer be able to appear here on earth. But the cunning lamas countered with the argument that this would not hamper the immediate embodiment of the ninth Khutuktu. It was decided to approach the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Ninth Panchen Lama for advice. However, the Communist Party prevailed and in 1930 conducted a large-scale show trial of several Mongolian nobles and spiritual leaders in connection with this search for a new incarnation.

There were attempts in Mongolia at the time to make Communist and Buddhist ideas compatible with one another. In so doing, lamas became excited about the myth that Lenin was a reincarnation of the historical Buddha. But other voices were likewise to be heard. In a pamphlet from the twenties we can also read that “Red Russia and Lenin are reincarnation of Langdarma, the enemy of the faith” (Bawden, 1969, p. 265). Under Josef Stalin this variety of opinion vanished for good. The Communist Party proceeded mercilessly against the religious institutions of Mongolia, drove the monks out of the monasteries, had the temples closed and forbade any form of clerical teaching program.

### The Mongolian Shambhala myth

We do not intend to consider in detail the recent history of Mongolia. What primarily interests us are the tantric patterns which had an effect behind the political stage. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century prophetic religious literature has flourished in the country. Among the many mystic hopes for salvation, the *Shambhala myth* ranks as the foremost. It has always accompanied the Mongolian nationalist movement and is today enjoying a powerful renaissance after the end of Communism. Up until the thirties it was almost self-evident for the Lamaist milieu of the country that the conflicts with China and Russia were to be seen as a preliminary skirmish to a future, worldwide, final battle which would end in a universal victory for Buddhism. In this, the figures of the *Rudra Chakrin*, of the *Buddha Maitreya*, and of *Genghis Khan* were combined into an overpowering messianic figure who would firstly spread unimaginable horror so as to then lead the converted masses, above all the Mongols as the chosen people, into paradise. The soldiers of the Mongolian army proudly called themselves “*Shambhala warriors*”. In a song of war from the year 1919 we may read

We raised the yellow flag

For the greatness of the Buddha doctrine;

We, the pupils of the Khutuktu,

Went into the battle of Shambhala!

(Bleichsteiner, 1937, p. 104).

Five years later, in 1924, the Russian, Nicholas Roerich, met a troop of Mongolian horsemen in Urga who sang:

Let us die in this war,

To be reborn

## As horsemen of the Ruler of Shambhala

(Schule der Lebensweisheit, 1990, p. 66).

He was informed in mysterious tones that a year before his arrival a Mongol boy had been born, upon whom the entire people's hopes for salvation hung, because he was an incarnation of *Shambhala*.

The Buriat, Agvan Dorjiev, a confidante of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, about him we still have much to report, persistently involved himself in every event which has affected Mongolia since the beginning of the twentieth century. "It was his special contribution", John Snelling writes, "to expand pan-Mongolism, which has been called 'the most powerful single idea in Central Asia in the twentieth century', into the more expansive pan-Buddhism, which, as we have already noted, he based upon the *Kalachakra* myths, including the legend of the messianic kingdom of *Shambhala*" Snelling, 1993, p. 96).

The *Shambhala myth* lived on in the underground after Communist accession to power, as if a military intervention from out of the mythic kingdom were imminent. In 1935 and 1936 ritual were performed in Khorinsk in order to speed up the intervention by the king of *Shambhala*. The lamas produced postcards on which could be seen how the armies of *Shambhala* poured forth out of a rising sun. Not without reason, the Soviet secret service suspected this to be a reference to Japan, whose flag carries the national symbol of the rising sun. In fact, the Japanese did make use of the *Shambhala* legend in their own imperialist interests and attempted to win over Mongolian lamas as agents through appeals to the myth.

## Dambijantsan, the bloodthirsty avenging lama

To what inhumanity and cruelty the tantric scheme can lead in times of war is shown by the story of the "avenging lama", a Red Hat monk by the name of Dambijantsan. He was a Kalmyk from the Volga region who was imprisoned in Russia for revolutionary activities. "After an adventurous flight", writes Robert Bleichsteiner, "he went to Tibet and India, where he was trained in tantric magic. In the nineties he began his political activities in Mongolia. An errant knight of Lamaism, demon of the steppes, and tantric in the style of Padmasambhava, he awakened vague hopes among some, fear among others, shrank from no crime, emerged unscathed from all dangers, so that he was considered invulnerable and unassailable, in brief, he held the whole Gobi in his thrall" (Bleichsteiner, 1937, p. 110).

Dambijantsan believed himself to be the incarnation of the west Mongolian war hero, *Amursana*. He succeeded over a number of years in commanding a relatively large armed force and in executing a noteworthy number of victorious military actions. For these he was awarded high-

ranking religious and noble titles by the “living Buddha” from Urga. The Russian, Ferdinand Ossendowski, reported of him, albeit under another name (Tushegoun Lama) [1], that “Everyone who disobeyed his orders perished. Such a one never knew the day or the hour when, in his *yurta* or beside his galloping horse on the plains, the strange and powerful friend of the Dalai Lama would appear. The stroke of a knife, a bullet or strong fingers strangling the neck like a vise accomplished the justice of the plans of this miracle worker” (Ossendowski, 1924, p. 116). There was in fact the rumor that the god-king from Lhasa had honored the militant Kalmyk.

Dambijantsan’s form of warfare was of a calculated cruelty which he nonetheless regarded as a religious act of virtue. On August 6, 1912, after the taking of Khobdo, he had Chinese and Sartan prisoners slaughtered within a tantric rite. Like an Aztec sacrificial priest, in full regalia, he stabbed them in the chest with a knife and tore their hearts out with his left hand. He laid these together with parts of the brain and some entrails in skull bowls so as to offer them up as *bali* sacrifices to the Tibetan terror gods. Although officially a governor of the Khutuktu, for the next two years he conducted himself like an autocrat in western Mongolia and tyrannized a huge territory with a reign of violence “beyond all reason and measure” (Bawden, 1969, p. 198). On the walls of the yurt he live in hung the peeled skins of his enemies.

It was first the Bolsheviks who clearly bothered him. He fled into the Gobi desert and entrenched himself there with a number of loyal followers in a fort. His end was just as bloody as the rest of his life. The Russians sent out a Mongolian prince who pretended to be an envoy of the “living Buddha”, and thus gained entry to the camp without harm. In front of the unsuspecting “avenging lama” he fired off six shots at him from a revolver. He then tore the heart from the body of his victim and devoured it before the eyes of all present, in order — as he later said — to frighten and horrify his followers. He thus managed to flee. Later he returned to the site with the Russians and collected the head of Dambijantsan as proof. But the “tearing out and eating of the heart” was in this case not just a terrible means of spreading dread, but also part of a traditional cult among the Mongolian warrior caste, which was already practiced under Genghis Khan and had survived over the centuries. There is also talk of it in a passage from the *Gesar* epic which we have already quoted. It is likewise found as a motif in Tibetan thangkas: *Begtse*, the highly revered war god, swings a sword in his right hand whilst holding a human heart to his mouth with his left.

In light of the dreadful tortures of which the Chinese army was accused, and the merciless butchery with which the Mongolian forces responded, an extremely cruel form of warfare was the rule in Central Asia in the nineteen twenties. Hence an appreciation of the avenging lama has arisen among the populace of Mongolia which sometimes extends to a glorification of his life and deeds. The Russian, Ossendowski, also saw in him an almost supernatural redeemer.

### **Von Ungern Sternberg: The “Order of Buddhist Warriors”**

In 1919 the army of the Byelorussian general, Roman von Ungern Sternberg, joined up with Dambijantsan. The native Balt was of a similar cruelly eccentric nature to the “avenger lama”.

Under Admiral Kolchak he first established a Byelorussian bastion in the east against the Bolsheviks. He saw the Communists as “evil spirits in human shape” (Webb, 1976, p. 202). Later he went to Mongolia.

Through his daredevilry he there succeeded in building up an army of his own and positioning himself at its head. This was soon to excite fear and horror because of its atavistic cruelty. It consisted of Russians, Mongolians, Tibetans, and Chinese. According to Ossendowski, the Tibetan and Mongolian regiments wore a uniform of red jackets with epaulettes upon which the swastika of Genghis Khan and the initials of the “living Buddha” from Urga were emblazoned. (In the occult scene von Ungern Sternberg is thus seen as a precursor of German national socialism.)

In assembling his army the baron applied the tantric “law of inversion” with utmost precision. The hired soldiers were firstly stuffed with alcohol, opium, and hashish to the point of collapse and then left to sober up overnight. Anyone who now still drank was shot. The General himself was considered invulnerable. In one battle 74 bullets were caught in his coat and saddle without him being harmed. Everyone called the Balt with the shaggy moustache and tousled hair the “mad baron”. We have at hand a bizarre portrait from an eyewitness who saw him in the last days before his defeat: “The baron with his head dropped to his chest, silently rode in front of his troops. He had lost his hat and clothing. On his naked chest numerous Mongolian talismans were hanging on a bright yellow cord. He looked like the incarnation of a prehistoric ape man. People were afraid even to look at him” (quoted by Webb, 1976, p. 203).

This man succeeded in bringing the Khutuktu, driven away by the Chinese, back to Urga. Together with him he staged a tantric defense ritual against the Red Army in 1921, albeit without much success. After this, the hierarch lost trust in his former savior and is said to have made contact with the Reds himself in order to be rid of the Balt. At any rate, he ordered the Mongolian troops under the general’s command to desert. Von Ungern Sternberg was then captured by the Bolsheviks and shot. After this, the Communists pushed on to Urga and a year later occupied the capital. The Khutuktu had acted correctly in his own interests, then until his death he remained at least *pro forma* the head of state, although real power was transferred step by step into the hands of the Communist Party.

All manner of occult speculations surround von Ungern Sternberg, which may essentially be traced to one source, the best-seller we have already quoted several times by the Russian, Ferdinand Ossendowski, with the German title of *Tiere, Menschen, Götter* [English: Beasts, Men and Gods]. The book as a whole is seen by historians as problematic, but is, however, considered authentic in regard to its portrayal of the baron (Webb, 1976, p. 201). Von Ungern Sternberg quite wanted to establish an “order of military Buddhists”. “For what?”, Ossendowski has him ask rhetorically. “For the protection of the processes of evolution of humanity and for the struggle against revolution, because I am certain that evolution leads to the Divinity and revolution to bestiality” (Ossendowski, 1924, p. 245). This order was supposed to be the elite of an Asian state,

which united the Chinese, the Mongolians, the Tibetans, the Afghans, the Tatars, the Buriats, the Kyrgyzstanis, and the Kalmyks.

After calculating his horoscope the lamas recognized in von Sternberg the incarnation of the mighty Tamerlan (1336-1405), the founder of the second Mongolian Empire. The general accepted this recognition with pride and joy, and as an embodiment of the great Khan drafted his vision of a world empire as a "military and moral defense against the rotten West..." (Webb, 1976, p. 202). "In Asia there will be a great state from the Pacific and Indian Oceans to the shore of the Volga", Ossendowski presents the baron as prophesying. "The wise religion of Buddha shall run to the north and the west. It will be the victory of the spirit. A conqueror and leader will appear stronger and more stalwart than Jenghiz Khan .... and he will keep power in his hands until the happy day when, from his subterranean capital, shall emerge the king of the world" (Ossendowski, 1924, p. 265).

Here he had uttered the key phrase which continues to this day to hold the occult scene of the West enthralled, the "king of the world". This figure is supposed to govern in a kingdom below the ground somewhere in Central Asia and from here exercise an influence on human history. Even if Ossendowski refers to his magic empire under the name of *Agartha*, it is only a variant upon or supplement to the *Shambhala myth*.<sup>[2]</sup> His "King of the World" is identical to the ruler of the *Kalachakra* kingdom. He "knows all the forces of the world and reads all the souls of humankind and the great book of their destiny. Invisibly he rules eight hundred million men on the surface of the earth and they will accomplish his every order" (Ossendowski, 1924, p. 302). Referring to Ossendowski, the French occultist, René Guénon, speculates that the *Chakravartin* may be present as a trinity in our world of appearances: in the figure of the Dalai Lama he represents spirituality, in the person of the Panchen Lama knowledge, and in his emanation as Bogdo Khan (Khutuktu) the art of war (Guénon, 1958, p. 37).

### **The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Mongolia**

Since the end of the fifties the pressure on the remainder of the "Yellow Church" in Mongolia has slowly declined. In the year 1979 the Fourteenth Dalai Lama visited for the first time. Moscow, which was involved in a confrontation with China, was glad of such visits. However it was not until 1990 that the Communist Party of Mongolia relinquished its monopoly on power. In 1992 a new democratic constitution came into effect.

Today (in 1999) the old monasteries destroyed by the Communists are being rebuilt, in part with western support. Since the beginning of the nineties a real "re-Lamaization" is underway among the Mongolians and with it a renaissance of the *Shambhala myth* and a renewed spread of the *Kalachakra* ritual. The Gelugpa order is attracting so many new members there that the majority of the novices cannot be guaranteed a proper training because there are not enough tantric teachers. The consequence is a sizeable army of unqualified monks, who not rarely earn their

living through all manner of dubious magic practices and who represent a dangerous potential for a possible wave of Buddhist fundamentalism.

The person who with great organizational skill is supervising and accelerating the “rebirth” of Lamaism in Mongolia goes by the name of Bakula Rinpoche, a former teacher of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and his right hand in the question of Mongolian politics. The lama, recognized as a higher tulku, surprisingly also functions as an Indian ambassador in Ulan Bator alongside his religious activities, and is accepted and supported in this dual role as ambassador for India and as a central figure in the “re-Lamaization process” by the local government. In September of 1993 he had an urn containing the ashes of the historical Buddha brought to Mongolia for several weeks from India, a privilege which to date no other country has been accorded by the Indian government. Bakula enjoys such a great influence that in 1994 he announced to the Mongolians that the ninth incarnation of the Jabtsundamba Khutuktu, the supreme spiritual figure of their country, had been discovered in India.

The Dalai Lama is aware of the great importance of Mongolia for his global politics. He is constantly a guest there and conducts noteworthy mass events (in 1979, 1982, 1991, 1994, and 1995). In Ulan Bator in 1996 the god-king celebrated the *Kalachakra* ritual in front of a huge, enthusiastic crowd. When he visited the Mongolian Buriats in Russia in 1994, he was asked by them to recognize the greatest military leader of the world, Genghis Khan, as a “Bodhisattva”. The winner of the Nobel peace prize smiled enigmatically and silently proceeded to another point on the agenda. The Kundun enjoys a boundless reverence in Mongolia as in no other part of the world (except Tibet). The grand hopes of this impoverished people who once ruled the world hang on him. He appears to many Mongolians to be the savior who can lead them out of the wretched financial state they are currently in and restore their fame from the times of Genghis Khan.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] It must be the same person, since the author refers to him as a Kalmyk Russian and as the “avenging lama”.

[2] Marco Pallis is of the opinion that Ossendowski has simply substituted the name *Agartha* for *Shambhala*, because the former was very well known in Russia as a “world center”, whilst the name *Shambhala* had no associations (Robin, 1986, pp. 314-315).

## 11. THE SHAMBHALA MYTH AND THE WEST

The spread of the *Shambhala myth* and the *Kalachakra Tantra* in the West has a history of its own. It does definitely not first begin with the expulsion of the lamas from Tibet (in 1959) and their diaspora across the whole world, but rather commences at the beginning of the twentieth century in Russia with the religious political activity of an ethnic Buriat by the name of Agvan Dorjiev.

### The Shambhala missionary Agvan Dorjiev

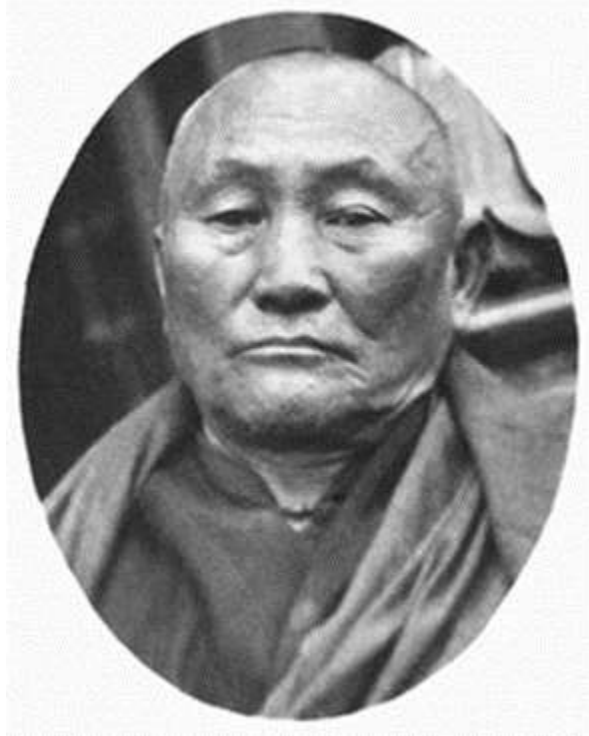
Even in his youth, Agvan Dorjiev (1854–1938), who trained as a monk in Tibet, was already a very promising individual. For this reason he was as a young man entrusted with caring for the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. The duties of the Buriat included among other things the ritual cleansing of the body and bedroom of the god-king, which implies quite an intimate degree of contact. Later he was to be at times the closest political adviser of His Holiness.

Dorjiev was convinced that the union of Tibet with Russia would provide the Highlands with an extremely favorable future, and was likewise able to convince the hierarch upon the Lion Throne of the merits of his political vision for a number of years. He thus advanced to the post of Tibetan envoy in St. Petersburg and at the Russian court. His work in the capital was extremely active and varied. In 1898 he had his first audience with Tsar Nicholas II, which was supposed to be followed by others. The Russian government was opening up with greater tolerance towards the Asian minorities among whom the Buriats were also to be counted, and was attempting to integrate them more into the Empire whilst still respecting their religious and cultural autonomy, instead of missionizing them as they had still done at the outset of the 19th century.

Even as a boy, Nicholas II had been fascinated by Tibet and the “yellow pontiff” from Lhasa. The famous explorer, Nikolai Przhevalsky, introduced the 13-year-old Tsarevitch to the history and geopolitics of Central Asia. Przhevalsky described the Dalai Lama as a „powerful Oriental pope with dominion over some 250 million Asiatic souls” and believed that a Russian influence in Tibet would lead to control of the entire continent and that this must be the first goal of Tsarist foreign policy (Schimmelpennink, 1994, p. 16). Prince Esper Esperovich Ukhtomsky, influential at court and deeply impressed by the Buddhist teachings, also dreamed of a greater Asian Empire under the leadership of the “White Tsars”.

Since the end of the 19th century Buddhism had become a real fashion among the Russian high society, comparable only to what is currently happening in Hollywood, where more and more stars profess to the doctrine of the Dalai Lama. It was considered stylish to appeal to Russia’s Asiatic inheritance and to invoke the Mongolian blood which flowed in the veins of every Russian with

emotional phrases. The poet, Vladimir Solovjov declaimed, “Pan-Mongolism — this word: barbaric, yes! Yet a sweet sound” (Block, n.d., p. 247).



### **Agvan Dorjiev**

The mysto-political influences upon the court of the Tsar of the naïve demonic village magician, Rasputin, are common knowledge. Yet the power-political intrigues of an intelligent Asian doctor by the name of Peter Badmajev ought to have been of far greater consequence. Like Dorjiev, whom he knew well, he was a Buriat and originally a Buddhist, but he had then converted to Russian Orthodox. His change of faith was never really bought by those around him, who frequented him above all as a mighty shaman that was “supposed to be initiated into all the secrets of Asia” (Golowin, 1977, p. 219).

Badmajev was head of the most famous private hospital in St. Petersburg. There the cabinet lists for the respective members of government were put together under his direction. R. Fülöp-Miller has vividly described the doctor’s power-political activities: “In the course of time medicine and politics, ministerial appointments and ‘lotus essences’ became more and more mingled, and a fantastic political magic character arose, which emanated from Badmajev’s sanatorium and determined the fate of all Russia. The miracle-working doctor owed this influence especially to his successful medical-political treatment of the Tsar. ... Badmajev’s mixtures, potions, and powders brewed from mysterious herbs from the steppes served not just to remedy patient’s metabolic disturbances; anyone who took these medicaments ensured himself an important office in the state at the same time” (Fülöp-Miller, 1927, pp. 112, 148). For this “wise and crafty Asian” too, the guiding idea was the establishment of an Asian empire with the “White Tsar” at its helm.

In this overheated pro-Asian climate, Dorjiev believed, probably somewhat rashly, that the Tsar had a genuine personal interest in being initiated into the secrets of Buddhism. The Buriat’s goal was to establish a *mchod-yon* relationship between Nicholas II and the god-king from Lhasa, that is, Russian state patronage of Lamaism. Hence a trip to Russia by the Dalai Lama was prepared which, however, never eventuated.

### **Bolshevik Buddhism**

One would think that Dorjiev had a compassionate heart for the tragic fate of the Tsarist family. At least, Nicholas II had supported him and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had even declared the Russian heir to the throne to be a Bodhisattva because a number of attempts to give him a Christian baptism mysteriously failed. At Dorjiev's behest, pictures of the Romanovs adorned the Buddhist temple in St. Petersburg.

Hence, it is extremely surprising that the Buriat greeted the Russian October Revolution and the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks with great emotion. What stood behind this about-face, a change of attitude or understandable opportunism? More likely the former, then at the outset of the twenties Dorjiev, along with many famous Russian orientalists, was convinced that Communism and Buddhism were compatible. He publicly proclaimed that the teaching of Shakyamuni was an "atheistic religion" and that it would be wrong to describe it as "unscientific". Men in his immediate neighborhood even went so far as to celebrate the historical Buddha as the original founder of Communism and to glorify Lenin as an incarnation of the Enlightened One. There are reliable rumors that Dorjiev and Lenin had met.

Initially the Bolsheviks appreciated such currying of favor and made use of it to win Buddhist Russians over to their ideas. Already in 1919, the second year of the Revolution, an exhibition of Buddhist art was permitted and encouraged amidst extreme social turmoil. The teachings of Shakyamuni lived through a golden era, lectures about the Sutras were held, numerous Buddhist books were published, contacts were established with Mongolian and Tibetan scholars. Even the ideas of pan-Mongolism were reawakened and people began to dream of blood-filled scenes. In the same year, in his famous poem of hate *Die Skythen* [The Scythians], Alexander Block prophesied the fall of Europe through the combined assault of the Russians and the Mongolians. In it we can read that

We shall see through the slits of our eyes

How the Huns fight over your flesh,

How your cities collapse

And your horses graze between the ruins.

(Block, n.d., p. 249)

Even the Soviet Union's highest-ranking cultural official of the time, Anatoli Vassilievich Lunacharski, praised Asia as a pure source of inexhaustible reserves of strength: "We need the Revolution to toss aside the power of the bourgeoisie and the power of rationality at the same time so as to regain the great power of elementary life, so as to dissolve the world in the real music of intense being. We respect and honor Asia as an area which until now draws its life

energy from exactly these right sources and which is not poisoned by European reason" (Trotzkij, 1968, p. 55).

Yet the Buddhist, pan-Asian El Dorado of Leningrad transformed itself in 1929 into a hell, as the Stalinist secret service began with a campaign to eradicate all religious currents. Some years later Dorjiev was arrested as a counterrevolutionary and then put on trial for treason and terrorism. On January 29, 1938 the "friend of the Dalai Lama" died in a prison hospital.

### *The Kalachakra temple in St. Petersburg*

There is a simple reason for Dorjiev's enthusiasm for Russia. He was convinced that the *Kalachakra* system and the *Shambhala myth* had their origins in the Empire of the Tsar and would return via it. In 1901 the Buriat had received initiations into the Time Tantra from the Ninth Panchen Lama which were supposed to have been of central significance for his future vision. Ekai Kawaguchi, a Buddhist monk from Japan who visited Tibet at the turn of the last century, claims to have heard of a pamphlet in which Dorjiev wrote "*Shambhala* was Russia. The Emperor, moreover, was an incarnation of Tsongkhapa, and would sooner or later subdue the whole world and found a gigantic Buddhist empire" (Snelling, 1993, p. 79). Although it is not certain whether the lama really did write this document, it fits in with his religious-political ideas. Additionally, the historians are agreed: "In my opinion," W.A. Unkrig writes, "the religiously-based purpose of Agvan Dorjiev was the foundation of a Lamaist-oriented kingdom of the Tibetans and Mongols as a theocracy under the Dalai Lama ... [and] under the protection of Tsarist Russia ... In addition, among the Lamaists there existed the religiously grounded hope for help from a 'Messianic Kingdom' in the North ... called 'Northern Shambhala'" (quoted by Snelling, 1993, p. 79).

At the center of Dorjiev's activities in Russia stood the construction of a three-dimensional mandala — the Buddhist temple in St. Petersburg. The shrine was dedicated to the *Kalachakra* deity. The Dalai Lama's envoy succeeded in bringing together a respectable number of prominent Russians who approved of and supported the project. The architects came from the West. A painter by the name of Nicholas Roerich, who later became a fanatic propagandist for *Kalachakra* doctrine, produced the designs for the stained-glass windows. Work commenced in 1909. In the central hall various main gods from the Tibetan pantheon were represented with statues and pictures, including among others Dorjiev's wrathful initiation deity, *Vajrabhairava*. Regarding the décor, it is perhaps also of interest that there was a swastika motif which the Bolsheviks knocked out during the Second World War. There was sufficient room for several lamas, who looked after the ritual life, to live on the grounds. Dorjiev had originally intended to triple the staffing and to construct not just a temple but also a whole monastery. This was prevented, however, by the intervention of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The inauguration took place in 1915, an important social event with numerous figures from public life and the official representatives of various Asian countries. The Dalai Lama sent a powerful delegation, "to represent the Buddhist Papacy and assist the Tibetan Envoy Dorjiev" (Snelling,

1993, p. 159). Nicholas II had already viewed the *Kalachakra* temple privately together with members of his family several days before the official occasion.

Officially, the shrine was declared to be a place for the needs of the Buriat and Kalmyk minorities in the capital. With regard to its occult functions it was undoubtedly a tantric mandala with which the *Kalachakra* system was to be transplanted into the West. Then, as we have already explained, from the lamas' traditional point of view founding a temple is seen as an act of spiritual occupation of a territory. The legends about the construction of first Buddhist monastery (Samye) on Tibetan soil show that it is a matter of a symbolic deed with which the victory of Buddhism over the native gods (or demons) is celebrated. Such sacred buildings as the *Kalachakra* temple in St. Petersburg are cosmograms which are — in their own way of seeing things — employed by the lamas as magic seals in order to spiritually subjugate countries and peoples. It is in this sense that the Italian, Fosco Maraini, has also described the monasteries in his poetic travelogue about Tibet as “factories of a holy technology or laboratories of spiritual science” (Maraini, 1952, p. 172). In our opinion this approximates very closely the Lamaist self-concept. Perhaps it is also the reason why the Bolsheviks later housed an evolutionary technology laboratory in the confiscated *Kalachakra* shrine of St. Petersburg and performed genetic experiments before the eyes of the tantric terror gods.

The temple was first returned to the Buddhists in June 1991. In the same year, a few days before his own death, the English expert on Buddhism, John Snelling, completed his biography of the god-king's Buriat envoy. In it he poses the following possibility: “Who knows then but what I call Dorjiev's *Shambhala Project* for a great Buddhist confederation stretching from Tibet to Siberia, but now with connections across to Western Europe and even internationally, may well become a very real possibility” (Snelling, 1993, xii). Here, Snelling can only mean the explosive spread of Tantric Buddhism across the whole world.

If we take account of the changes that time brings with it, then today the *Kalachakra* temple in Petersburg would be comparable with the *Tibet House* in New York. Both institutions function(ed) as semi-occult centers outwardly disguised as cultural institutions. In both instances the spread of the *Kalachakra* idea is/was central as well. But there is also a much closer connection: Robert Alexander Farrar Thurman, the founder and current leader of the *Tibet House*, went to Dharamsala at the beginning of the sixties. There he was ordained by the Dalai Lama in person. Subsequently, the Kalmyk, Geshe Wangyal (1901-1983), was appointed to teach the American, who today proclaims that he shall experience the Buddhization of the USA in this lifetime. Thurman thus received his tantric initiations from Wangyal.

This guru lineage establishes a direct connection to Agvan Dorjiev. Namely, that as a 19-year-old novice Lama Wangyal accompanied the Buriat to St. Petersburg and was initiated by him. Thus, Robert Thurman's “line guru” is, via Wangyal, the old master Dorjiev. Dorjiev — Wangyal — Thurman form a chain of initiations. From a tantric viewpoint the spirit of the master live on in the figure of the pupil. It can thus be assumed that as Dorjiev's “successor” Thurman represents an

emanation of the extremely aggressive protective deity, *Vajrabhairava*, who had incarnated himself in the Buriat. At any rate, Thurman has to be associated with Dorjiev's global *Shambhala* utopia. His close interconnection with the *Kalachakra Tantra* is additionally a result of his spending several months in Dharamsala under the supervision of Namgyal monks, who are specialized in the time doctrine.

### Madame Blavatsky and the Shambhala myth



Yet, as the real pioneering deed in the spread of the *Shambhala myth* in the West we have to present the life and work of a woman. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891), the influential founder of Theosophy, possibly contributed more to the globalization of a warlike Buddhism than she was aware of. The noble-born Russian is supposed to have already been a gifted medium as a child. After an adventurous life (among other things she worked as a rider in a circus) her spiritual career as such began in the 1870s in the USA. At first she tried her hand at all kinds of spiritualist séances. Then she wrote her first occult book, later world famous, *Isis Unveiled* (first published in 1875). As the title reveals, at this stage she oriented herself to secret Egyptian teachings. There is almost no trace of Buddhist thought to be found in this work. In 1879 together with her most loyal follower, Colonel Henry Steele Olcott, Blavatsky made a journey to Bombay and to the teachings of Buddha Gautama. There too, the doctrine of the “great White Brotherhood of Tibet” and the mysterious spiritual masters who determine the fate of humanity was invented, or rather, in Blavatsky's terms, “received” from the higher realms.

Tibet, which, her own claims to the contrary, she had probably never visited, was a grand obsession for the occultist. She liked to describe her own facial characteristics as “Kalmyk-Buddhist-Tatar”. Even though her esoteric system is syncretized out of all religions, since her work on the *Secret Doctrine* Tibetan/Tantric Buddhism takes pride of place among them.

A detailed comparison of the later work of the Theosophist with the *Shambhala myth* and the *Kalachakra Tantra* would reveal astounding similarities. Admittedly she only knew the Time Tantra from the brief comments of the first western Tibetologist, the Hungarian, Csoma de Körös, but her writings are permeated by the same spirit which also animates the “Highest Tantra of all”. The mystic *Secret Book of Dzyan*, which the Russian claimed to have “received” from a Tibetan master and which she wrote her *Secret Doctrine* as a commentary upon, is central to her doctrine. It is supposed to be the first volume of the 21 *Books of Kiu te*, in which all the esoteric doctrines of our universe are encoded according to Blavatsky. What are we dealing with here? The historian David Reigle suspects that by the mysterious *Books of Kiu te* she means the tantra section of the Tibetan *Tanjur* and *Kanjur*, the officially codified Tibetan collections of Buddhist doctrinal writings, about which only little was known at the time. But this is not certain. There is also supposed to be a Tibetan tradition which claims that the *Books of Kiu te* were all to be found in the kingdom of *Shambhala* (Reigle, 1983, p. 3). Following such opinions Madame Blavatsky’s secret directions would have been drawn directly from the kingdom.

In her philosophy the ADI BUDDHA system is of central importance, and likewise the fivefold group of the Dhyani (or meditation) Buddhas and the glorification of *Amitabha* as the supreme god of light, whom she compares with the “Ancient of Days” of the Jewish Cabala. Astutely, she recognizes the Chinese goddess *Guanyin* as the “genius of water” (Spierenburg, 1991, p. 13). But as “mother, wife, and daughter” she is subordinate to the “First Word”, the Tibetan fire god *Avalokiteshvara*. The result is — as in the *Kalachakra Tantra* — an obsessive solar and fire cult. Her fire worship exhibits an original development in the principal deity of our age, *Fohat* by name. Among other things he is said to emanate in all forms of electricity.

Madame Blavatsky was not informed about the sexual magic practices in the tantras. She herself supported sexual abstinence as “occult hygiene of mind and body” (Meade, 1987, p. 398). She claimed to be a virgin all her life, but a report from her doctors reveals this was not the truth. “To Hades with the sex love!”, she cursed, “It is a beastly appetite that should be starved into submission” (Symonds, 1959, p. 64). When the sexes first appeared — we learn from the *Secret Book of Dzyan* — they brought disaster to the world. The decline into the material began with a sexual indiscretion of the gods: “They took wives fair to look upon. Wives from the mindless, the narrow-headed. ... Then the third eye acted no longer” (Blavatsky, 1888, vol. 2, p. 13).

Blavatsky was probably convinced that her female body was being borrowed by a male Tibetan yogi. At any rate her closest co-worker, Henry Steele Olcott, who so admired her works that he

could not believe they could be the work of a *woman*, suspected this. Hence, thinking of Madame, he asked an Indian guru, "But can the *atman* [higher self] of a yogi be transferred into the body of a woman?". The Indian replied, "He can clothe his soul in her physical form with as much ease as he can put on a woman's dress. In every physical aspect and relation he would then be like a woman; internally he would remain himself" (Symonds, 1959, p. 142). As in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, androgyny is also considered the supreme goal along the path to enlightenment in Theosophy. The gods are simultaneously "male-female". Their bisexuality is concentrated in the figure of *Avalokiteshvara*, the cosmic Adam.

Through her equation of the ADI BUDDHA with the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara* Madame Blavatsky clears the way for a cosmologization of the latter's earthly embodiment, the Dalai Lama. For her, the Bodhisattva is "the powerful and all-seeing", the "savior of humanity" and we learn that as "the most perfect Buddha" he will incarnate in the Dalai Lama or the Panchen Lama in order to redeem the whole world (Blavatsky, 1888, vol. 2, p. 178).

As in the *Shambhala myth*, the Russian presumes that a secret world government exists, whose members, the *Mahatmas*, were brought together in an esoteric society in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by the founder of the Gelugpa order, Tsongkhapa. The "White Brotherhood", as this secret federation is known, still exists in Tibet, even if hidden from view, and influences the fate of humanity. It consists of superhumans who watch over the evolution of the citizens of the earth.

Likewise, the catastrophic destruction of the old eon and the creation of a new paradisiacal realm are part of the Theosophical world view. Here, Blavatsky quotes the same Indian source from which the *Kalachakra Tantra* is also nourished, the *Vishnu Purana*. There it says of the doomsday ruler that, "He ... shall descend on Earth as an outstanding Brahman from *Shambhala* ... endowed with the eight superhuman faculties. Through his irresistible power he will ... destroy all whose hearts have been relinquished to evil. He will re-establish righteousness on earth" (Blavatsky, 1888, vol. 1, p. 378).

Of course, the Russian was able to read much into the Tibetan Buddhist doctrine, since in her time only a few of the original texts had been translated into a western language. But it is definitely wrong to dismiss her numerous theses as pure fantasy, as her speculative world brings her closer to the imagination and occult ambience of Lamaism than some philologically accurate translations of Sanskrit writings. With an unerring instinct and a visionary mastery she discovered many of the ideas and forces which are at work in the tantric teachings. In that she attained these insights more through intuition and mediumism than through scientific research, she can be regarded as the semi-aware instrument of a Buddhist-Tibetan world conquest. At any rate, of all the western "believers in Tibet" she contributed the most to the spread of the idea of the Land of Snows as a unfathomable mystery. Without the occult veil which Madame Blavatsky cast over Tibet and its clergy, Tantric Buddhism would only be half as attractive in the West. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama is also aware of the great importance of such female allies and has hence frequently praised Blavatsky's pioneering work.

## Nicholas Roerich and the Kalachakra Tantra

A further two individuals who won the most respect for the *Shambhala myth* in the West before the flight of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, were also Russians, Nicholas Roerich (1874–1947) and his wife Helena Ivanovna (1879–1955). Roerich was a lifelong painter, influenced by the late art nouveau movement. He believed himself to be a reincarnation of Leonardo da Vinci. Via his paintings, of which the majority featured Asian subjects, especially the mountainous landscapes of the Himalayas, he attempted to spread his religious message. He became interested in the ideas of Theosophy very early on; his wife translated Madame Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* into Russian. The occultist led him to Buddhism, which was as we have said *en vogue* in the society of St. Petersburg at the time. We have already briefly encountered him as a designer of Agvan Dorjiev's *Kalachakra* temple. He was a close friend of the Buriat. In contrast, he hated Albert Grünwedel and regarded his work with deep mistrust. Between the years of 1924 and 1928 he wandered throughout Central Asia in search of the kingdom of *Shambhala* and subsequently published a travel diary.

In 1929 he began a very successful international action, the *Roerich Banner of Peace* and the *Peace Pact*, in which warring nations were supposed to commit themselves to protecting each other's cultural assets from destruction. In the White House in 1935 the Roerich Pact was signed by 21 nations in the presence of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The migrant Russian succeeded in gaining constant access to circles of government, especially since the American agricultural minister, Henry Wallace, had adopted him as his guru. In 1947 the painter died in the *Himalayan* foothills of northern India.

With great zeal his wife continued her husband's religious work up until the nineteen-fifties. Helena Ivanovna had from the outset actively participated in the formation of her husband's ideas. Above all it is to her that we owe the numerous writings about *Agni Yoga*, the core of their mutual teachings. Roerich saw her as something like his shakti, and openly admitted to her contribution to the development of his vision. He said in one statement that in his understanding of the world "the duty of the woman [is] to lead her male partner to the highest and most beautiful, and then to inspire him to open himself up to the higher world of the spirit and to import both valuable and beautiful aspects and ethical and social ones into life" (Augustat, 1993, p. 50). In his otherwise Indian Buddhist doctrinal system there was a revering of the "mother the world" that probably came from the Russian Orthodox Church.

Roerich first learned about the *Kalachakra Tantra* from Agvan Dorjiev during his work on the temple in St. Petersburg. Later, in Darjeeling, he had contact to the lama Ngawang Kalzang, who was also the teacher of the German, Lama Govinda, and was well versed in the time teachings. It is, however, most unlikely that Roerich received specific initiations from him or others, as his statements about the *Kalachakra Tantra* do not display a great deal of expertise. Perhaps it was precisely because of this that he saw in it the "happy news" of the new eon to come. He thus took up exactly the opposite position to his contemporary and acquaintance, Albert Grünwedel, who

fanatically denounced the supreme Buddhist doctrinal system as a work of the devil. “*Kalachakra*”, Roerich wrote, “is the doctrine which is attributed to the numerous rulers of *Shambhala*. ... But in reality this doctrine is the great revelation brought to humankind ... by the lords of fire, the sons of reason who are and were the lords of *Shambhala*” (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, pp. 79, 81).

According to Roerich, the “fiery doctrine was covered in dust “ up until the twentieth century. (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 122). But now the time had come in which it would spread all over the world. As far as their essential core was concerned, all other religions were supposed to be included in the Time Tantra already: “There are now so many teachers — so different and so hostile to one another; and nonetheless so many speak of the One, and the *Kalachakra* expresses this One”, the Russian has a Tibetan lama say. “One of your priests once asked me: Are the Cabala and *Shambhala* not parts of the one teaching? He asked: Is the great Moses not a initiate of the same doctrine and a servant of its laws?” (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 78).

### *Agni yoga*

For Roerich and his wife the Time Tantra contains a sparkling fire philosophy: „This Teaching of *Kalachakra*, this utilization of the primary energy, has been called the Teaching of Fire. The Hindu peoples know the great *Agni* — ancient teaching though it be, it shall be the new teaching for the New Era. We must think of the future; and in the teaching of *Kalachakra* we know there lies all the material which may be applied for greatest use. [...] *Kalachakra* is the Teaching ascribed to the various Lords of *Shambhala* [...] But in reality this Teaching is the Great Revelation brought to humanity at the dawn of its conscious evolution in the third race of the fourth cycle of Earth by the Lords of Fire, the Sons of reason who were and are the Lords of *Shambhala*” (Reigle, 1986, p. 38). The interpretation which the Russian couple give to the *Kalachakra Tantra* in their numerous publications may be described without any exaggeration as a “pyromaniac obsession”. For them, fire becomes an autocratic primary substance that dissolves all in its flames. It functions as the sole creative universal principle. All the other elements, out of the various admixtures of which the variety of life arises, disappear in the flaming process of creation: “Do not seek the creative fire in the inertia of earth, in the seething waves of water, in the storms of the air (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. I, p. 5). Keep away from the other “elements” as “they do not love fire” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. I, p. 7). Only the “fiery world” brings blessing. Everyone carries the “sparks of the fiery world in their hearts” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. II, p. 8). This announces itself through “fiery signs”. “Rainbow flames” confirm the endeavors of the spirit. But only after a “baptism of fire” do all the righteous proceed with “flaming hearts” to the “empire of the fiery world” in which there are no shadows. They are welcomed by “fire angels”. “The luminosity of every part of the fiery world generates an everlasting radiance” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. II, p. 8). The “song of fire sounds like the music of the spheres” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. II, p. 8). At the center of this world lies the “supreme fire”. Since the small and the large cosmos are one, the “fiery chakras” of the individual humans correspond to “the fiery structures of space” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. I, p. 240).

This fire cult is supposed to be ancient and in the dim and distant past its shrines already stood in the Himalayas: „Beyond the Kanchenjunga are old menhirs of the great sun cult. Beyond the

Kanchenjunga is the birthplace of the sacred Swastika, sign of fire. Now in the day of *Agni Yoga*, the element of fire is again entering the spirit.” (N. Roerich, 1985, p. 36, 37). Madame Blavatsky’s above-mentioned god of electricity, *Fohat*, is also highly honored by the Roerichs.

The Roerichs’ fiery philosophy is put into practice through a particular sacred system which is called *Agni Yoga*. We were unable to determine the degree to which it follows the traditions of the already described *Sadanga Yoga*, practiced in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. *Agni Yoga* gives the impression that is conducted more ethically and with feelings than technically and with method. Admittedly the Roerich texts also talk of an unchaining of the *kundalini* (fire serpent), but nowhere is there discussion of sexual practices. In contrast -the philosophy of the two Russians requires strict abstinence and is antagonistic to everything erotic.

In 1920 the first *Agni Yoga* group was founded by the married couple. The teachings, we learn, come from the East, indeed direct from the mythical kingdom: „And Asia when she speaks the Blessed *Shambhala*, about *Agni Yoga*, about the Teaching of Flame, knows that the holy spirit of flame can unite the human hearts in a resplendent evolution” (N. Roerich, 1985, p. 294). *Agni Yoga* is supposed to join the great world religions together and serve as a common basis for them.

With great regret the Roerichs discover that the people do not listen to the “fiery tongues” that speak to them and want to initiate them into the secrets of the flames. They appropriated only the external appearances of the force of fire, like electricity, and otherwise feared the element. Yet the “space fire demands revelation” and whoever closes out its voice will perish in the flames (H. I. Roerich, 1980, p. 30).

Even if it is predicted in the cosmic plan, the destruction of all dark and ignorant powers does not happen by itself. It needs to be accelerated by the forces of good. It is a matter of victory and defeat, of heroic courage and sacrificial death. Here is the moment in which the figure of the *Shambhala* warriors steps into the plan and battles with the inexorably advancing Evil which wants to extinguish Holy Flame: “They shall come — the extinguishers; they shall come — the destroyers; they shall come — the powers of darkness. Corrosion that has already begun cannot be checked” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. I, p. 124).

### ***Shambhala***

We hear from Helena Ivanova Roerich that “the term *Shambhala* truly is inseparably linked to fiery apparitions” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. I, p. 26). “Fire signs introduce the epoch of *Shambhala*”, writes her spouse (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 29). It is not surprising that the Russian visionaries imagined the temple of *Shambhala* as an “alchemic laboratory”, then a fire oven, the *athanor*, also stood at the heart of the hermetic art, as western alchemy was known.

The couple consider *Shambhala*, the “city of happiness”, to be the “geographic residence or workplace of the brotherhood and seat of the interplanetary government in the trans-Himalaya” (Augustat, 1993, p. 153). In an official fundamental declaration of the two it says: “The brotherhood is the spiritual union of highly developed entities from other planets or hierarchs, which as a cosmic institution is responsible to a higher institution for the entire evolution of the planet Earth. The interplanetary government consists of cosmic offices, which are occupied by the hierarch depending on the task and the age” (Augustat, 1993, p. 149). The *Mahatmas*, as these hierarchs are called in reference to Madame Blavatsky, have practical political power interests and are in direct contact with certain heads of state of our world, even if the ordinary mortals have no inkling of this.

Then it is impossible for normal humans to discover the main lodge of the secret society: “How can one find the way to our laboratories? Without being called no-one will get to us”, Roerich proclaims (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 9). From there the *Mahatmas* coordinate an army of in part paid agents, who operate here on Earth in the name of the hidden kingdom. In the meantime the whole planet is covered by a net of members, assistants, contacts, and spies of the “international government” who are only waiting for the sign from their command center in *Shambhala* in order to step into the light and reveal themselves to humanity.

Likewise, the activities and resolutions of the “invisible international government” are all but impenetrable for an outsider. There is a law which states that each earthly nation will only be visited and “warned” by an envoy from *Shambhala* once in a century. An exception was probably made during the French Revolution, then “hierarchs” like the Comte de Saint Germain for example were extremely active at this troubled time. Sadly he died in the year 1784 “as a result of the undisciplined thinking of one of his assistants”. (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 117). The dissolute life of his sadhaka (pupil), Cagliostro, was probably to blame for his not being able to participate in the great events of 1789 (the storming of the Bastille).

According to Roerich the members of the government of *Shambhala* have the ability to telepathically penetrate into the consciousness of the citizens of Earth without them realizing where particular ideas come from: “Like arrows the transmissions of the community bore into the brains of humanity” (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 10). Sometimes this takes place using apparatuses especially constructed for this purpose. But they are not permitted to openly reveal their amazing magical abilities: “Who can exist without food? Who can get by without sleep? Who is immune to heat and cold? Who can heal wounds? Truly only one who has studied *Kalachakra*” (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 77).



**Tableau of N. Roerich: “The command of Rigden-jyepo”**

For the Russian couple all the interventions of the governing yogi caste have just one goal, to prepare for the coming of the future Buddha *Maitreya Morya* or *Rigden-jyepo*, who shall then make all important decisions. According to the Roerichs both names are synonyms for the *Rudra Chakrin*, the “wrathful wheel turner” and doomsday ruler of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. We thus await a fairytale oriental despot who cares about his subjects: “Just like a diamond the light shines from the tower of *Shambhala*. He is there — *Rigden-jyepo*, untiring, ever watchful for the sake of humanity. His eyes never close. In his magic mirror he sees everything which happens on Earth. And the power of his thoughts penetrates through to the distant countries. ... His immeasurable riches lay waiting to help all the needy who offer to serve the cause of uprightness” (Augustat, 1993, p. 11).

In passing, this doomsday emperor from *Shambhala* also reveals himself to be the western king of the Holy Grail, who holds the Holy Stone in his hands and who emigrated to Tibet under cover centuries ago. He is returning now, messengers announce him. True Knights of the Holy Grail are already incarnated on Earth, unrecognized. The followers of the Roerichs even believe that their master himself protected the grail for a time and then returned it to *Shambhala* on his trip to Asia (Augustat, 1993, p. 114).

### **Apocalypse now**

“Why do clouds gather when the Stone [the Grail] becomes dull? If the Stone becomes heavy, blood shall be spilled”, we learn mysteriously (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 88). Behind this secret of the grail lies the apodictic statement known from almost all religions that total war, indeed the destruction of the world, is necessary in order to attain paradise. It is essential because in a good dualist cliché the “brotherhood of Good” is always counterposed by the “brotherhood of

Evil". The "sons of darkness" have succeeded in severing humanity's connection to the "higher world", the "bright hierarchy". The forces of the depths lurk everywhere. Extreme caution is required since an ordinary mortal can barely distinguish the Evil from the Good, and further, "the brotherhood of Evil attempts to imitate the Good's method of action" (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 126).

The final battle between Light and Darkness is — the Roerichs say- presaged in the prophecies of the ancestors and the writings of the wise and must therefore take place. When natural disasters and crimes begin to pile up on Earth, the warriors from *Shambhala* will appear. At the head of their army stands the Buddha *Maitreya Morya*, who " [combats] the prince of darkness himself. This struggle primarily takes place in the subtle spheres, whereas here [on earth] the ruler of *Shambhala* operates through his earthly warriors. He himself can only be seen under the most exceptional circumstances and would never appear in a crowd or among the curious. His appearance in fiery form would be disastrous for everybody and everything since his aura is loaded with energies of immense strength" (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 152). It could be thought that this concerned an atomic bomb. At any rate the battle will be conducted with a fire and explosive power which allows of comparison only to the atomic detonations in Hiroshima and Nagasaki:

Fiery the battle

with blazing torches,

Blood red the arrows

against the shining shield

(*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 110)

Thus the armies of *Shambhala* storm forth. „Space is filled with fire. The lightning of the *Kalki* avatar [*Rudra Chakrin*] — the preordained *Maitreya* — flashes upon the" (N. Roerich, 1985, p. 76). Even if *Kalki* also goes by the epithet of "Lord of Compassion", with his enemies he knows no mercy. Accompanied by *Gesar*, the mythic war hero of the Tibetans, he will storm forward mounted on a "white horse" and with a "comet-like, fiery sword" in his hand. Iron snakes will consume outer space with fire and frenzy (N. Roerich, 1988 p. 12). "The Lord", we read, " strikes the people with fire. The same fiery element presides over the Day of Judgment. The purification of evil is performed by fire. Misfortunes are accompanied by fires" (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. I, 46).

Those who fight for *Shambhala* are the precursors of a new race who take control of the universe after Armageddon, after the "wheat has been separated from the chaff" (Augustat, 1993, p. 98). That is, to put it plainly, after all the inferior races have been eradicated in a holocaust.

### *Distribution in the west*

As far as the fate of Tibet is concerned, the prophecies that Roerich made at the end of the twenties have in fact been fulfilled: „We must accept it simply, as it is: the fact that the true teaching shall leave Tibet”, he has a lama announce, „and shall again appear in the South. In all countries, the covenants of Buddha shall be manifested. Really, great things are coming.” (N. Roerich, 1985, p. 3) In 1959 the Fourteenth Dalai Lama fled to India in the south and from this point in time onwards Tibetan Buddhism began to be spread all around the world.

Roerich and his wife saw themselves as agents of *Shambhala* who were supposed to make contact with those governing our world in order to warn them. They could at any rate appeal to a meeting with Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Their followers, however, believe that they were higher up in the hierarchy and that they were incarnated *Mahatmas* from the kingdom.

In the meantime the Roerich cult is most popular in Eastern Europe, where even before the fall of Communism it had penetrated the highest circles of government. The former Bulgarian Minister for Culture, Ludmilla Shiffkova, daughter of the Communist head of state Todor Shiffkov, was almost fanatically obsessed with the *Agni* master's philosophy, so that she planned to introduce his teachings as part of the official school curriculum. For a whole year, cultural policy was conducted under the motto “N. K. Roerich — A cultural world citizen”, and she also organized several overseas exhibitions including works by her spiritual model as well.

Mikhail Gorbachev and his wife also supported numerous Roerich initiatives. In Russia, the renaissance of the visionary painter was heralded for years in advance in elaborate symposia and exhibitions, in order to then fully blossom in the post-Communist era. In Alma Ata in October 1992, a major ecumenical event was organized by the international Roerich groups under the patronage of the president of Kazakhstan, at the geographical gateway, so to speak, behind which the land of *Shambhala* is widely believed to have once lain. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama hesitated as to whether he ought to visit the Congress before deciding for scheduling reasons to send a telegram of greeting and a high-ranking representative.

### **The “Shambhala warrior” Chögyam Trungpa**

In 1975 the Tibetan, Chögyam Trungpa (1940–1987), gathered several of his western pupils around himself and began to initiate them into a special spiritual discipline which he referred to as “*Shambhala Training*”. As a thirteen-month-old infant the Rinpoche from the Tibetan province of Kham was recognized as the tenth reincarnation of the Trungpa and accepted into the Kagyupa order. In 1959 he had to flee from the Chinese. In 1963 he traveled to England and studied western philosophy and comparative religion at Oxford. Like no other Tibetan lama of his time, he

understood how to make his own contribution to western civilization and culture. As a brilliant rhetorician, poet, and exotic free spirit he soon found numerous enthusiastic listeners and followers. In 1967 he founded the first European tantric monastery in Scotland. He gave it the name and the ground-plan of *Samye Ling* — in remembrance of the inaugural Tibetan shrine of the same name that Padmasambhava erected at the end of the 8th century despite resistance from countless demons.

In the opinion of Trungpa's followers the demonic resistance was enormous in Scotland too: In 1969 the young lama was the victim of a serious car accident which left him with a permanent limp. There is an ambiguous anecdote about this unfortunate event. Trungpa had reached a fork in the road in his car — to the right the road led in the direction of his monastery, the road to the left to the house in which his future wife lived. But he continued to drive straight ahead, plowing right into a shop selling magic and joke articles. Nevertheless, his meteoric rise had begun. In 1970 he went to the United States.

Trungpa's charming and initially anarchic manner, his humor and loyalty, his lack of respect and his laugh magnetically attracted many young people from the sixties generation. They believed that here the sweet but dangerous mixture of the exotic, social critique, free love, mind-expanding drugs, spirituality, political activism and self-discovery, which they had tasted in the revolutionary years of their youth, could be rediscovered. Trungpa's friendship with the radical beatnik poet Allan Ginsberg and other well-known American poets further enhanced his image as a "wild boy" from the roof of world. Even the first monastery he founded, *Samye Ling*, was renowned for the permissive "spiritual" parties which were held there and for the liberal sex and drug consumption.

But such excesses are only one side of things. Via the tantric law of inversion Trungpa intended to ultimately transform all this abandon (his own and that of his pupils) into discipline, goodness, and enlightened consciousness. The success of the guru was boundless. Many thousands came to him as pilgrims. All over America and Europe spiritual centers (*dharmadhatu*s) were created. The *Naropa Institute* (near Denver, Colorado) was established as a private university, where alongside various Buddhist disciplines fine arts could also be studied.

### *The Shambhala warrior*

Trungpa had told one of his pupils that during deep meditation he was able to espy *Shambhala*. He also said he had obtained the teachings for the "*Shambhala training*" directly from the kingdom. The program consists of five levels: 1. The art of being human; 2. Birth of the warrior; 3. Warrior in the world; 4. Awakened heart; 5. Open sky: The big bang. Anyone who had completed all the stages was considered a perfect "*Shambhala warrior*". As a spiritual hero he is freed from the repulsiveness which the military trade otherwise implies. His characteristics are kindness, an open heart, dignity, elegance, precision, modesty, attentiveness, fearlessness, equanimity, concentration, and confidence of victory. To be a warrior, one of Trungpa's pupils writes, irrespective of whether as a man or a woman, means to live honestly, also in regard to fear, doubt,

depression, and aggression which comes from outside. To be a warrior does not mean to conduct wars. Rather, to be a warrior means to have the courage to completely fathom oneself (Hayward, 1997, p. 11). This subjectification of the warrior ethos brings with it that the weapons employed first of all represent purely psycho-physical states: controlled breathing, the strict stance, walking upright, clear sight.

The first basic demand of the training is, as in every tantric practice, a state of „egolessness“. This is of great importance in the *Shambhala* teachings, writes Trungpa. It is impossible to be a warrior if you have not experienced egolessness. Without egolessness, your consciousness is always filled with your ego, your personal plans and intentions (Hayward, 1997, p. 247). Hence the individual ego is not changed through the exercises, rather the pupil tries solely to create an inner emptiness. Through this he allows himself to be transformed into a vessel into which the cult figures of the Tibetan pantheon can flow. According to Trungpa these are called *dralas*. Translated literally, that means “to climb out over the enemy” or in a further sense, energy, line of force, or “gods”.

The “empty” pupils thus become occupied by tantric deities. As potential “warriors” they naturally attract all possible forms of eager to fight *dharmapalas* (tutelary gods). Thus a wrathful Tibetan “protector of the faith” steps in to replace the *sadhaka* and his previous western identity. This personal transformation takes place through a ritual which in Trungpa’s *Shambhala* tradition is known as “calling the gods”. The supernatural beings are summoned with spells and burning incense. When the thick, sweet-smelling white smoke ascends, the pupils sing a long incantation, which summons the *dralas*. At the end of the song the warrior pupils circle the smoke in a clockwise direction and constantly emit the victory call of the warrior (Hayward, 1997, p. 275). This latter is “*Lha Gyelo* — victory to the gods” — the same call which the Dalai Lama cried out as he crossed the Tibetan border on his flight in 1959.

Trungpa was even more fascinated by the ancient national hero, *Gesar*, whose barbaric daredevilry we have already sketched in detail, than he was by the *dharmapalas*. The guru recommended the atavistic war hero to his followers as an example to imitate. Time and again he proudly indicated that his family belonged to the belligerent nomadic tribe of the “Mukpo”, from whose ranks *Gesar* also came. For this reason he ennobled his pupils as the “Mukpo family” and thus proclaimed them to be comrades-in-arms of *Gesar*. The latter — said Trungpa — would return from *Shambhala*, “leading an army to conquer the forces of darkness in the world” (Trungpa, 1986, p. 7).

But Trungpa did not just summon up Tibetan *dharmapalas* and heroes with his magic, rather he also invoked the deceased spirits of an international, on closer examination extremely problematic, warrior caste: the Japanese samurai, the North American plains Indians, the Jewish King David, and the British King Arthur with his round table — all archetypal leading figures who believed that justice could only be achieved with a sword in the hand, who were all absolutely ruthless in creating peace. These “holy warriors” always stood opposed to the “barbarians” of

another religion who had to be exterminated. The non-dualist world view which many of the original Buddhist texts so forcefully demand is completely cancelled out in the mythic histories of these warlike models.

Trungpa led his courses under the name of "*Dorje Dradul*" which means "invincible warrior". Completely in accord with an atavistic fighter tradition only beasts of prey were accepted as totem animals for his pupils: the snow lion, the tiger, the dragon. *Dorje Dradul* was especially enthusiastic about the mythic sun bird, the *garuda*, about its fiery redness, wildness, and its piercing cry commanding the cessation of thought like a lightning bolt (Hayward, 197, p. 251). *Garuda* is the sun bird *par excellence*, and since time immemorial the followers of the warrior caste have also been worshippers of the sun. Thus in the center of Trungpa's *Shambhala* mission a solar cult is fostered. But it is not the natural sun which lights up all, but rather the "Great Eastern Sun" which rises at the beginning of a new world era when the *Shambhala* warriors seize power over the world. It sinks as a mighty cult symbol into the hearts of his pupils: "So, we begin to appreciate the *Great Eastern Sun*, not as something outside from us, like the sun in the sky, but as the Great Eastern Sun in our head and shoulders, in our face, our hair, our lips, our chest" (Trungpa, 1986, p. 39). Why of all people it was the chairman of the Communist Party of China, Mao Zedong, who was worshipped by the Red Guard as the *Great Eastern Sun* is a topic to which we shall return.

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The basic ideology of the Shambhala program divides the world into two visions: Great Eastern Sun, which corresponds to enlightenment in the Buddhist path, and setting sun, which corresponds to samsara. [...] Great Eastern Sun is cheering up; setting sun is complaining and criticizing. Great Eastern sun is elegant and rich; setting sun is sloppy and poor. To paraphrase George Orwell: "Great Eastern Sun good, setting sun bad." (Butterfield, 1994, p. 96).

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### *From anarchy to despotism*

Trungpa played brilliantly with the interchangeability of reality and non-reality, even regarding his own person, he was especially a master of the tantric law of inversion. He thus simply declared his excessive alcoholism and his sexual cravings to be the practicing of the tantra path. Whether alcohol is a poison or a medicine depends on one's own attentiveness. Conscious drinking — that is when the drinker remains self-aware — changes the effect of the alcohol. Here the system is steered through attentiveness. Alcohol becomes an intelligent protective mechanism. But it has a destructive effect if one abandons oneself to comfort (Hayward, 1997, pp. 306–307). Yet *Dorje Dradul* was not free of the aggressive moods which normally occur in heavy alcoholics. He thus spread fear and horror through his frequent angry outbursts. But his pupils forgave him everything, proclaimed him a "holy fool" and praised his excesses as the expression of a "*crazy wisdom*". They often attempted to emulate his alcoholism: I think there is a message for us in his drinking, Dennis Ann Roberts believed, "I know his drinking has certainly encouraged all of us to drink more" (Boucher, 1985, p. 243). Another pupil enthusiastically wrote: "He's great. I love the fact

that he works on his problems the way he does. He doesn't hide it. He drinks, and it's almost killed him. So he is working on it. I find that great" (Boucher, 1985, p. 243).

Similar reasons are offered for his sexual escapades. In 1970 he abandoned his vow of celibacy and married a young British aristocrat. His bride is said to have been thirteen years old in 1969 (*Tibetan Review*, August 1987, p. 21). In addition he had a considerable number of yoginis, who were obviously uninformed about the andocentric manipulations of Tantrism. There was admittedly a minor rebellion among the female followers when the Karmapa insisted on talking only with the men during his visit to a Trungpa center, but essentially the western *karma mudras* occupied by Tibetan deities behaved loyally towards their lord and master. A lot of women have been consorts of Rinpoche — one of them tells that "The Tibetans are into passion, they think sexuality is an essential energy to work with. You don't reject it. So it's a whole other perception of sexuality anyway" (Boucher, 1985, p. 244).

Such affirmations of tantric practice by the female pupils are definitely not exceptions and they most clearly testify to the charisma which the tantra master projects. Thus we learn from another of Trungpa's lovers, "My first meeting with him was a real turn-off. I mean, I didn't want a guru who did things like that. The irony was that I had left my other Tibetan Buddhist teacher partly because he was coming on to me. And I just couldn't handle it. And Rinpoche is very much into alcohol and having girl friends. Now it makes total sense to me" (Boucher, 1985, p. 241).

Chögyam Trungpa has obviously succeeded in keeping his western *karma mudras* under control. This was much more difficult for the Tibetan Tantric, Gedun Chöpel, who died in 1951. He left behind an amusing estimation of the "women of the west" from the thirties which shows how much has changed in the meantime: "In general a girl of the west is beautiful, splendid, and more courageous than others. Her behavior is coarse, and her face is like a man's. There is even hair around her mouth. Fearless and terrifying, she can be tamed only by passion. Able to suck the phallus at the time of play, the girl of the west is known to drink regenerative fluid. She does it even with dogs, bulls and any other animals and with father and son, etc. She goes without hesitation with whoever can give the enjoyment of sex" (Chöpel, 1992, p. 163).

Towards the end of his life, Trungpa the "indestructible warrior" moved further and further away from his Hippie past. As the head of his lineage the Karmapa is said to have not been at all pleased to observe the permissive practices in the "wild" guru's centers. However, in accordance with the tantric "law of inversion", after a few years the pendulum swung from anarchy to the other pole of despotism and all at once Trungpa abandoned himself to his fascistoid dreams. His protective troops, *Dorje Kasung*, initially a kind of bodyguard composed of volunteers was transformed within a short period into a paramilitary unit in khaki uniforms. The guru himself put aside his civilian clothing for a time and appeared in high-ranking military dress as a "*Shambhala* general". We do not know whether, alongside the warlike ethos of the tantric tradition, the physical handicap which he sustained in his car accident in England did not also trigger his unusual interest

in military things as a counter-reaction. At any rate his “military parades” became a fixed part of the *Shambhala* training.

On other occasions the former “freak” donned a pinstripe suit with a colorful tie and looked like nothing more than an Asian film gangster. Thus he really did play brilliantly through the ambivalent spectrum completely laid out in the tantric repertoire, from poetic anarchist and flower power dancer to saber-rattling dictator and underworld boss. In 1987 the master warrior died and his body was committed to the flames in Vermont (USA).

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“‘May I shrivel up instantly and rot,’ we vowed, ‘if I ever discuss these teachings with anyone who has not been initiated into them by a qualified master.’ As if this were not enough, Trungpa told us that if we ever tried to leave Vajrayana, we would suffer unbearable, subtle, continuous anguish, and disasters would pursue us like furies. Heresy had real meaning in this religion, and real consequences. Doubting the dharma or the guru and associating with heretics were causes for downfall. In Tibetan literature, breaking faith with the guru must be atoned by such drastic measures as cutting off your arms and offering it at the door of his cave in hopes that he might take you back.” – “To be part of Trungpa’s inner circle, you had to take a vow never to reveal or even discuss some of the things he did. This personal secrecy is common with gurus, especially in Vajrayana Buddhism. It is also common in the dysfunctional family system of alcoholics and sexual abusers. This inner circle secrecy puts up an almost insurmountable barrier of a healthily skeptical mind.” (Butterfield, 1994, p. 11, 100) Trungpa’s Shambhala Warriors see: <http://sealevel.ns.ca/ctr/photo01.html> and <http://www.shambhalashop.com/archives/junephoto/june12.html>

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### *The inheritance*

The immediate inheritance which Trungpa left behind him was catastrophic. Completely in the spirit of his Tibetan guru, the American, Thomas Rich, who succeeded him under the name of “Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin”, continued the carefree permissiveness of his master with a tantric justification. However, in 1988 there was a scandal from which the organization has not fully recovered to this day. The “Vajra Regent” had been HIV positive for three years and had infected numerous members with the AIDS virus in the meantime. He died in 1991. Trungpa’s son, Sawang Ösel Rangdroel, then took over the leadership.

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“From Vajrayana point of view, passion, aggression, and ignorance, the sources of human suffering, are also the well-spring of enlightenment. Afflictions like AIDS are not merely disasters, but accelerations toward wisdom, and opportunities to wake up. They can be transformed into buddha-mind. Trungpa was a Vajra master who had empowered Tendzin to guide students on this path” (Butterfield, 1994, p. 7).

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Even if Trungpa's *Shambhala warriors* have forfeited quite a deal of their attractiveness in recent years, thousands still revere the master as the "holy fool" and "indestructible warrior", who brought the "Eastern sun" to the West. For this reason he is said to also be prayed to in the whole of Asia as a great Bodhisattva and *Maha Siddha* (Hayward, 1997, p. 319). "For ten years he presented the *Shambhala Teachings*", summarizes one of his sadhakas, "In terms of time and history, that seems insignificant; however in that short span he set in motion the powerful force of goodness that can actually change the world" (Trungpa, 1986, p. 157). Only rarely does a "deserter" go public, like P. Marin for example, a strong critic of the Naropa Institute, for whom this western Tibetan Buddhist organization is "a feudal, priestly tradition transplanted to a capitalist setting" (quoted by Bishop, 1993, p. 101).

On the other hand it goes without saying that the Tantric Trungpa time and again draws attention to the fact that the warlike figures he invokes are illusionary reflections of the human ego and that even the *Shambhala* kings are projections of one's own consciousness. But if everything really can be reduced to forms of consciousness, then it remains totally unclear why it is time and again the phantoms of a destructive black-and-white mode of thought which are summoned up to serve as examples along the personal initiation path. Wouldn't it make more sense, indeed be more logical, to directly conjure up those "peace gods" who have surmounted such dualist thought patterns? What is the reason for this glorification of an atavistic warrior caste?

It goes without saying that in Trungpa's system no-one is entitled to even dream of critically examining the *dralas* (gods). Although only projections of one's own consciousness according to the doctrine, they are considered sacrosanct. They are pure, good, and exemplary. Since Trungpa's *Shambhala Training* unquestioningly incorporates all of the established tantric deities, the entire martial field of Tibetan Buddhism with its entrenched concept of "the enemy" and its repellant daemonic power is adopted by people who naively and obligingly set out to attain personal enlightenment.

We thus have the impression that the pupils of the tantra masters are exposed to a hypnotic suggestion so as to make them believe that their own spiritual development was the agenda whereas they have long since become the pawns of Tibetan occultism in whose unfathomable net of regulations (*tantra* means 'net') they have become entrapped. Once their personal ambitions have been dissolved into nothingness they can be enslaved as the loyal lackeys of a spiritual power politics which no longer sees the "higher self" in the "universal monarch" but rather a real political "wrathful wheel turner" (*Rudra Chakrin*) who lays waste to the world with his armies from *Shambhala* so as to then establish a global Buddhocracy.

### Other Western Shambhala visions

James Hilton's novella, *Lost Horizon*, published in 1933, counts among the best-sellers of the last century. It tells of a monastery in the Land of Snows whose name, *Shangri-La*, is reminiscent of the kingdom of *Shambhala*. The term has in the meantime become a synonym for leisure, refinement, and taste, at least in the English-speaking world, and is employed by an Asian luxury hotel chain. The idyll described in the book concerns people who had retreated from the hustle and bustle of the modern world to the Himalayas and now devote themselves to exclusively spiritual enjoyments. It is, however, no Tibetan tulku but rather a Catholic missionary who collects together those tired of civilization in a hidden valley in the Land of Snows so as to share with them a study of the fine arts and an extended lifespan. The “monks” from the West do not even need to do without European bathtubs — otherwise unknown in the Tibet of the thirties. The essence of the *Shangri-La* myth ultimately consists in the transportation of “real” products of European culture and civilization to the “roof of the world”.

The most recent western attempt at spreading the Tibetan myth is Victoria LePage's book, *Shambhala*. The author presents the secret kingdom as an overarching mystery school, whose high priests are active as “an invisible, scientific and philosophical society which pursues its studies in the majestic isolation of the Himalayas” (LePage, 1996, p. 13). For LePage *Shambhala* is the esoteric center of all religions, the secret location from which every significant occult, and hence also religious, current of the world has emanated. Esoteric Buddhism, and likewise the ancient Egyptian priestly schools, the Pythagoreans, Sufism, the Knights Templar, alchemy, the Cabala, Freemasonry, Theosophy — yes even the witches cults — all originated here. Accordingly, the *Kalachakra Tantra* is the overarching “secret doctrine” from which all other mystery doctrines may be derived (LePage, 1996, p. 8).

The mythic kingdom, which is governed by a sun ruler, is to be found in Central Asia, there where the axis of the world, Mount Meru, is also to be sought. This carefree adoption of Buddhist cosmology does not present the author with any difficulties since the *axis mundi* is said to only be visible to the initiated. In accordance with the mandala principle her *Shambhala* has distributed numerous copies of itself all over the world — the Pyramids of Giza, the monastery at Athos, Kailash, the holy mountain. Sites of the Grail like Glastonbury and Rennes le Chateau are such “offshoots” of the hidden imperium — likewise only perceivable through initiated eyes. Together they form the acupuncture points of a cosmic body which corresponds to the mystic body of the *Kalachakra* master (i.e., taken literally, in the energy body of the Dalai Lama). LePage too, sees a great “mystic clock” in the Time Tantra. The segments of this time machine record the cyclical periods of the course of the world. A “hidden directorate”, a mysterious brotherhood of immortal beings in the Himalayas, ensures that the cosmic hours marked on the clockface are adhered to.

### **The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Shambhala myth**

LePage's global monopolization of the entire cultic life of our planet by the *Kalachakra Tantra* could be regarded as an important step in a worldwide Shambhalization plan of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Nonetheless, the *Kundun* deliberately prefers to leave such esoteric speculations (which are in no way at odds with his doctrine) to others, best of all “hobby Buddhists” like the author. So as not to lose political respectability, the *Kundun* keeps his statements about the

*Shambhala* question enigmatic: “Even for me *Shambhala* remains a puzzling, even paradox country”, the highest *Kalachakra* master reassures his listeners (Levenson, 1992, p. 305). All that we hear from him concretely is the statement that “the kingdom of *Shambhala* does indeed exist, but not in the usual sense” (Dalai Lama Fourteenth, 1993a, p. 307).

Can we expect a total world war in circa 300 years in accordance with the prophecy? His Holiness has no doubts about this either: “That lies in the logic of circulation!” (Levenson, 1992, p. 305). But then he modifies his statement again and speculates about whether the final battle is not to be interpreted as a psychological process within the individual. For dreamers for whom such a psychological interpretation is too dry, however, the *Kundun* subsequently hints that *Shambhala* could perhaps concern another planet and the soldiers of the kingdom could be extraterrestrials (Levenson, 1992, p. 305).

He understands how to rapidly switch between various levels of reality like a juggler and thus further enhance the occult ambience which already surrounds the *Shambhala myth* anyway. „Secrets partly revealed are powerful”, writes Christiaan Klieger, and continues, „The ability of the Dalai Lama to skillfully manipulate a complex of meaning and to present appropriate segments of this to his people and the world is part of his success as a leader” (Klieger, 1991, p. 76). Ultimately, everything is possible in this deliberate confusion, for example that the *Shambhala* king in person stands before us in the figure of His Holiness as some worshippers believe, or that Lhasa is the capital of the mythic country of “Kalapa” albeit not visible to mortal eyes. Should the *Kundun* some day return to Tibet as a savior — some people believe — then the veil would be lifted and the earthly/supernatural kingdom (*Shambhala*) would reveal itself to the world.

Similar speculations are in fact very popular in the Buddhist scene. On the official (!) homepage of the *Kalachakra Tantra* the “dharma master”, Khamtrul Rinpoche, explains to his readers that the current Dalai Lama is an incarnation of Kulika Pundarika, the eighth *Shambhala* king famed as the first commentator on the Time Tantra. But it gets better: “My companion [the goddess *Tara*, who led him through *Shambhala* in a dream]”, Khamtrul writes, “told me that the last Kulika King will be called *Rudra* with a wheel, 'the powerful and ferocious king who holds an iron wheel in his hand' ... and he will be none other than His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who will subdue everything evil in the universe” (Khamtrul, HPI 005). Following this revelation, which prophecies the *Kundun* as the military commander of an apocalyptic army, Rinpoche worries whether the *Shambhala* army is a match for the modern armaments industry with its missiles and nuclear bombs. Here the kindly *Tara* comforts and reassures him that no matter what weapons of mass destruction may be produced in our world, a superior counter-weapon would automatically be created by *Shambhala*’s magic armaments industry (Khamtrul, HPI 005).

In the words of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama “world peace” is supposed to be strengthened with every *Kalachakra* ritual. He repeats this again and again! But is this really his intention?

With an ironic undertone, the Tibetologist Donald L. Lopez (formerly one of the closest followers of the *Kundun*), writes in the final section of his book, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, that “this peace may have a special meaning, however, for those who take the initiation are planting the seeds to be reborn in their next lifetime in Shambhala, the Buddhist pure land across the mountains dedicated to the preservation of Buddhism. In the year 2245 [?], the army of the king will sweep out of Shambhala and defeat the barbarians in a Buddhist Armageddon,[!] restoring Buddhism to India and to the world and ushering in a reign of peace” (Lopez, 1998, p. 207).

## 12. FASCIST OCCULTISM AND IT'S CLOSE RELATIONSHIP TO BUDDHIST TANTRISM

Visionary fascism was, and indeed still is, exceptionally deeply fascinated by the Buddhocratic form of state. In the late thirties (as the various fascist systems bloomed in Europe and the whole world) Spencer Chapman, a traveler in Tibet, wrote that even in the days of the dictators one can only be amazed at what uncontested power the Dalai Lama possesses" (Chapman, 1940, p. 192). The idea of kingship of the world, the uniting of spiritual and secular power in a single person, the ideology of war in the *Shambhala* myth, the uncompromisingly andocentric orientation, the tantric vision of the feminine, the whole occult ambience and much more besides were specifically adopted by several fascist ideologists and welded together into an aggressive myth. As we shall soon see, entire fascist systems are based upon the adoption of Tibetan/tantric doctrines.

### The Fourteenth Dalai Lama's national socialist friends

As depressing as it may be for the Nobel peace prize winner's followers, there has been continuous contact between the Dalai Lama and the far right wing and former national socialists (Nazis). His close friendship with his German mentor, Heinrich Harrer has become the most well-known of these. It caused a small scandal in 1997-1998 when, after years of research, the Austrian journalist, Gerald Lehner, succeeded in making public Harrer's "brown-shirt" (i.e., German fascist) past, which the latter had been able to keep secret for many years. Harrer is not just anybody. He is one of the best-known international authors and has sold over four million books in 57 languages (mostly about Tibet and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama).

The Austrian mountain climber and competition skier joined the SS on April 1, 1938 and in the same year received instructions to climb Nanga Parbat in the Himalayas after an official meeting with Adolf Hitler. Heinrich Himmler, himself most interested in occult phenomena is said by Harrer to have offered him a Tibet expedition. In 1942, the *Reichsführer* of the SS (Himmler) ordered the creation of the *Sven Hedin Institut für Innerasienforschung* [Sven Hedin Institute for Central Asian Research]. This educational establishment had combined esoteric, scientific, and racial studies goals. It was completely in this vein that Himmler was interested in occult doctrines from "mysterious Tibet", and assumed — probably under the influence of theosophical ideas — that a "race with Nordic blood" existed there, oppressed by the English and Chinese, and waiting for their liberation by the Germans. Himmler's "advisor", reports the German magazine *Spiegel*, "... and the scientist Ernst Schäfer believed that Tibet was the cradle of humanity, the refuge of an 'Aryan root race', where a priestly caste had created a mysterious kingdom of *Shambhala* — decorated with the Buddhist symbol of the wheel of teaching, a swastika. In 1934 Schäfer set out on the first of two expeditions financed by the SS to track down remnants of the 'Nordic intellectual' nobility" (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 111).

Dr. Ernst Schäfer, a specialist on Tibet and an ornithologist, was one of Himmler's personal staff and in 1943 took over the scientific leadership of the notorious project, "*Ahnenerbe*" ('ancestral inheritance'), primarily devoted to racial studies. His third research trip to the Himalayas was officially described as the "SS Schäfer Expedition" and was considered a huge success (Kater 1997, p. 80). Upon his return in August 1939, the scientist was presented with the SS skull ring and dagger of honor in recognition. Subsequently, the *Reichsführer* of the black corps (Himmler) had grand plans for his protégé: Schäfer was supposed to return to Tibet and "stir up the Tibetan army against the British/Indian troops" with a shock troop of 30 men (Kater, 1997, p. 212). The undertaking was, however, called off at Hitler's direct order. In the years to follow, Schäfer instead built up the Sven Hedin Institute for Central Asian Research with great success, making it the largest division within the *Ahnenerbe* project.

But let us return to Heinrich Harrer. War broke out while he was still in India and the young German was interned by the British. It was not until 1944 that he was able to flee to Tibet with a comrade. Coincidence or fate led to his acting as the young Dalai Lama's personal tutor until the early 50s, and teaching him about all the "wonders" of western civilization and introducing him to the English language as well. It is very likely that his lessons were tainted by the contemporary *zeitgeist* which had swept through Hitler's Germany, and not by the British attitudes of the envoy Hugh Richardson, also present in Lhasa. This led in fact to some problems at the court of the young god-king and the English were not happy about his contact to Harrer. But there are nevertheless no grounds for describing the lessons the former SS member gave his "divine" pupil as fascist, particularly since they were primarily given after the end of the World War II. In 1952 His Holiness's German "teacher" returned to Europe.

The adaptation to film of Harrer's autobiographic bestseller, *Seven Years in Tibet*, triggered an international protest. Since the famous traveler through Tibet had told director Jean Jacques Annaud nothing about his "brown-shirt" past, and this only became public knowledge after the film had been finished, Annaud felt pressured to introduce "corrections". A remorseful Austrian was now shown, who begins his mountain-climbing career as a supporter of a regime accused of genocide and then, under the influence of the young *Kundun* and Tibetan Buddhism, reforms to become a "campaigner for human rights". In the film, he says of the brutal Chinese: "Terrible — I dare not think about how I myself was once so intolerant" (*Stern* 41/97, p. 24).

Reinhold Messner, the famous mountain climber, found such an admission of guilt from Hollywood's dream factory difficult to understand. He spoke up, confirming that he had long known about Harrer's political opinions. This man, he said had up until the present day still not learned anything, he still believed in the national socialist alpinist ideals. In contrast, the Dalai Lama's brother, Gyalo Thondup, defended the former SS member with the tasteless argument that what the Chinese had done to the Tibetans was worse and more cruel than what the Nazis had done to the Jews.

It is a fact that Harrer — in his own account- first turned against the Chinese invaders at the end of the fifties, after he had already left Tibet. There is not the slightest trace of a deep catharsis as depicted in Annaud's film to be found in the German's books. This was purely an invention of the director to avoid losing face before a world audience.

The journalist Gerhard Lehner also pursued a second lead: on September 13, 1994 eight veterans who had visited and reported from Tibet before 1950 met with the Dalai Lama in London. In a photo taken to record the occasion a second major SS figure can be seen beside Heinrich Harrer and directly behind the *Kundun*, Dr. Bruno Beger. Beger was the actual "expert" who pushed forward the racial studies research by Himmler's *Ahnenerbe* project (Kater, 1997, p. 208). He too, like the Tibetan explorer Ernst Schäfer, was a member of Himmler's personal staff. In 1939 he went to the Himalayas as a member of the SS Expedition. There he measured the skulls of more than 400 Tibetans in order to investigate a possible relationship between the Tibetan and Aryan 'races'. In 1943, Beger was sent to Auschwitz where he took the measurements of 150 mainly Jewish prisoners. These were later killed and added to a collection of skeletons. In 1971 Beger appeared in a German court and was sentenced to three years imprisonment on probation for his national socialist crimes.

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Frontpage of Bruno Beger's book: "Meine Begegnungen mit dem Ozean des Wissens" („My meetings with the Ocean of Knowledge") – Königstein 1986

For the Dalai Lama Beger has been of great help, because he did compose a statement, that Tibet was not part of China. (See The Status of Tibet in 1938-39 - Dr. Bruno Beger – [www.tibet.ca/en/newsroom/wtn/archive/old?y=1994&m=11&p=24-2\\_1](http://www.tibet.ca/en/newsroom/wtn/archive/old?y=1994&m=11&p=24-2_1)). The head of the Dalai Lama between two former SS-men: Bruno Beger on right side of his head and Heinrich Harrer on left side of his head: <http://www.tibet.com/Status/statement.html>

Some Links in English concerning Beger:

[www.nizkor.org/faqs/auschwitz/auschwitz-faq-14.html](http://www.nizkor.org/faqs/auschwitz/auschwitz-faq-14.html)  
[www.mazal.org/Lifton/LiftonT286.htm](http://www.mazal.org/Lifton/LiftonT286.htm)  
<http://greyfalcon.us/Quest%20of%20the%20Nazis.htm>  
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/mbilik/strut6.htm>

[http://www.tibet.ca/en/wtnarchive/2003/8/11\\_2.html](http://www.tibet.ca/en/wtnarchive/2003/8/11_2.html)

Beger as collaborator of Horror-Doctor August Hirt:

[http://www.auschwitz-muzeum.oswiecim.pl/html/eng/historia\\_KL/eksperymenty\\_ok.html](http://www.auschwitz-muzeum.oswiecim.pl/html/eng/historia_KL/eksperymenty_ok.html)

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The racist, who was the last survivor of the “SS Schäfer Expedition” (dying in 1998), met His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama at least five times (in 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, and 1994). The meetings were all very hearty affairs. The former SS member dedicated a small brochure entitled “My Encounters with the Ocean of Knowledge” to the first three (Beger, 1986).

The Dalai Lama (worshipped by his followers as the “Ocean of Wisdom” because of his “omniscience”) claims not to have been informed about his Nazi friends’ past. One may well believe this, yet he has not distanced himself from them since their exposure. His statements about Adolf Hitler and the “final solution to the question of the Jews” also seem strange. Just like his brother, Gyalo Thondup, he sees the dictator as a more noble figure than the Chinese occupiers of Tibet: “In 1959, in Lhasa, the Chinese shot Tibetan families from aeroplanes with machine guns. Systematic destruction in the name of liberation against the tyranny of the Dalai Lama! Hu, Hu, Hu! In Hitler's case he was more honest. In concentration camps he made it clear he intended to exterminate the Jews. With the Chinese they called us their brothers! Big brother bullying little brother! Hu, Hu, Hu! It's less honest, I think” (*Daily Telegraph*, August 15, 1998).

### **The Nazi–Tibet connection**

Were there occult intentions behind the “SS Schäfer Expedition”? In the neo-fascist literature these are considered a top secret mission of Himmler's to make contact with the “adepts of Shambhala and Agartha”. Authors from the scene like Wilhelm Landig, Miguel Serrano, Russell McCloud, etc., let their readers believe that through these expeditions a kind of metapolitical axis between Berlin and Lhasa was constructed. Dietrich Bronder knows that “Schäfer's SS men were permitted to enter holy Lhasa, otherwise closed to Europeans and Christians, even the magnificent Lamaist temple that contains just one huge symbol, the holiest in the Mongolian world — the swastika” (Bronder, 1975, p. 250)

Although in recent years comprehensive research findings about the interests of leading Nazis in occult phenomena have been published, this is currently played down by pro-Lamaist intellectuals, especially as far as a occult Nazi — Tibet connection is concerned. [1] Ernst Schäfer and Bruno Beger, the two leaders of the undertaking (the SS Schäfer expedition), are depicted as sober natural scientists. Heinrich Himmler' esoteric ambitions in Tibet were minimal, indeed “probably did not exist” (Brauen, 2000). Hitler himself appears as a decided anti-occultist. “However, the suggestion that Hitler was interested in Eastern esotericism or even Tibet can be ruled out” (Brauen, 2000, p. 65). With an appeal to the historian Goodrick-Clark, the pro-Lamaist

authors also assess the occult currents within the early Nazi movement (the notorious *Thule Society* for example) as insignificant, and completely lacking in evidence for a particular interest in Tibet. Rudolf Freiherr von Sebottendorf (1875-1945), the founder of the *Thule Society*, is said to have explicitly spoken out against the suggestion that the light came from the highlands of Asia.

We do not see it as our primary task here to historically prove the interweaving of the relevant SS members (Hitler, Himmler, Harrer, etc.) in an occult Nazi — Tibet connection. Things were not as cleanly rationalist and scientifically correct as the pro-Lamaist intellectuals would have it among the SS. When for example, at the presentation of a gift to the Tibetan regent in Lhasa Ernst Schäfer declaims, “Since the swastika is also the supreme and most holy symbol for us Germans, the motto of our visit is: A meeting of the Western and Eastern swastikas in friendship and peace ...” (quoted by Brauen, 2000, p. 79), then an occult note in accord with the *zeitgeist* of the time is present.

There are certainly also other, non-fascist, authors who create an occult correspondence between national socialism and Tibetan Buddhism via a esoteric interpretation of the “Hakenkreuz” (the *swastika*), a Buddhist symbol *par excellence*: “The rightward hooked cross [signifies] a prayer formula in Tibet”, writes Friedrich W. Doucet, “In its left-turned form — like the national socialist swastika — it designates the orthodox Yellow Hats ... it is the Yellow Hats who supervise the spiritual rules in the Tibetan ecclesiastical state and also exercise worldly power” (Doucet, 1979, p. 81).[2]

It is also certain that Himmler’s spiritual advisor, Karl Maria Wiligut (“Himmler’s Rasputin”), saw the “SS Schäfer Expedition” as an extremely occult undertaking and at Himmler’s direction attempted to exert an appropriate influence on the participants in the expedition. The SS standard bearer Wiligut/Weisthor, who was one of Himmler’s personal staff, was accredited with mediumistic abilities and he himself was convinced he was in contact with transpersonal powers. Wiligut/Weisthor was considered to be the *Schutz Staffel’s* (SS’s) expert on runes and designed the legendary skull ring of the SS. His megalomaniac overestimation of himself (there are authenticated statements from him to the effect that he believed he was the “secret King of Germany”) and the fact that he was deprived of the right of decision by his family led Himmler to discharge Wiligut from the SS in 1939 (Lange 1998, p. 271).

The German author Rüdiger Sunner quotes the report of a member of the “SS Schäfer Expedition” over a meeting with Wiligut.[3] During the encounter (in 1937 or 1938?), the latter was in a trance-like state and addressed his visitors in a guttural voice: “I telephoned my friends this evening ... in Abyssinia and America, in Japan and Tibet ... with all who come from another world in order to construct a new empire. The occidental spirit is thoroughly corrupted, we have a major task before us. A new era will come, for creation is subject to just one grand law. One of the keys lies with the Dalai Lama [!] and in the Tibetan monasteries.” The visitor was not a little distressed, and goes on to report: “Then came the names of monasteries and their abbots, of localities in eastern Tibet which I alone knew about ... Did he draw these out of my brain? Telepathy? To this day I do not

know, I know only that I left the place in a hurry” (Sünner, 1999, p. 50). In the 80s the Chilean Miguel Serrano took up the speculation anew that the Dalai Lama plays a key role in the Nazi-Tibet connection. His “skill”, this author says of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, is “closely linked with that of Hitler’s Germany ... on the basis of not yet discovered connections. A few years after Germany, Tibet also falls” (Serrano, 1987, p. 366).

Wiligut also believed that Lhasa would form a geomantic quadrilateral with Urga (Ulan Bator), the Egyptian pyramids, and Vienna. Miguel Serrano was later to expound similar ideas (in the seventies). Himmler too was interested in geomantic ideas and it cannot be excluded “that he hoped for more exact data about this from the Schäfer expedition” (Brauen, 2000, p. 78).

Otto Rahn, likewise a member of the SS, who in the 30s attempted to render the myth of the holy grail and the Cathar movement fruitful for the national socialist vision and the SS as some kind of “warrior monks”, assumed that the Cathars had been influenced by Tibetan Buddhism “One of the Cathari symbols of the spirit that is god which was taken over from Buddhism was the *mani*, a glowing jewel that lit up the world and allowed all earthly wishes to be forgotten. The *mani* is the emblem of the Buddhist law that drives out the night of misconception. In Nepal and Tibet it is considered the symbol of the Dyanibodhisattva Avalokiteshvara or Padmapani, charity” (Rahn, 1989, pp. 185, 107).

The myth of the “black sun” which was able to win a central place in the neo-fascist movement and displays similarities with the Tibetan *Rahu* myth from the *Kalachakra Tantra*, can be traced to the inspiration of Wiligut and his milieu among others. In a commentary on Wiligut’s runic writings, a pupil, Emil Rüdiger, mentions an invisible dark planet, *Santur* by name, which is supposed to influence human history and to be able to be microcosmically linked with the energy body of an adept. Appropriate yogic exercises (rune gymnastics) are recommended for producing “high intelligence effects” (Lange, 1998, p. 226). Just how seamlessly such “rune gymnastics” can be linked to tantric exercises can be seen in the writings of Miguel Serrano, the father of [“esoteric Hitlerism”](#) (Serrano, 1984).

It is thus not at all the case that there is no historical foundation for hypothesizing an occult Nazi — Tibet connection, even if it is publicly denied by one of the protagonists of the “SS Schäfer Expedition”, Bruno Beger (Lange 1998, p. 68). Nevertheless, an occult interconnection between the SS and Lamaist Tibet of the dimensions in which it is currently portrayed in a large number of neo-fascist and esoteric publications has to be described as a *post facto* construction. This construction could, however, we repeat, fall back on an esoteric ambience in which Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS, and other high-ranking Nazis moved. Thus the well-known, historically proven material has at any rate been sufficient to create new and very effective myths. In the Nazi- Tibet connection, we are thus dealing with a process of myth creation and not a historical set of events. In such processes, there is a blending of historical facts, the stuff of traditional sagas, straining for effect, and imaginary, visionary, religious, fantastic, and personal elements until it all binds into a resistant pattern and anchors itself as such in a culture. It is not

unusual for different mythologemes to become fused, and this is exactly, as we will show, what has happened in the case of the Nazi — Tibet connection. Here, racist Nazi myths have been fused with elements of the Tibetan Shambhala myth and with sexual magic practices from Tantric Buddhism.

In this process of myth construction it should also not be underestimated that the meetings known to have occurred between the Dalai Lama and former SS members (Schäfer, Harrer, Beger) have a occult significance alone by virtue of the fact that anybody who mentally negotiates an esoteric network interprets a meeting with the Dalai Lama as an occult event.

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On the Homepage of the Government of Tibet in Exile ( <http://www.tibet.com/Status/statement.html> ) 13. 09. 1994: The XIV. Dalai Lama between two former SS-men, Bruno Beger on his right behind and Heinrich Harrer on his left behind. The other persons, who visited Tibet before 1950, are: Mr Kazi Sonam Togyal, Mr Robert Ford, Mrs Ronguy Collectt (daughter of Sir Charles Bell), Mrs Joan Mary Jehu, Mr Archibald Jack and Prof. Fosco Maraini.

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In the meantime an enormous amount of literature about a suspected Nazi — Tibet connection has appeared, some examples of which we briefly introduce here:

- In 1958 an American publisher released the book *The Lightning and the Sun*, by Savitri Devi (“Hitler’s Priestess”), which presents Adolf Hitler as an avatar (an incarnation) of the sun god, alongside Akhenaton and Genghis Khan. Devi does not mention a Nazi — Tibet connection, but introduces the “avatar principle” into the myth building surrounding Hitler that is seized upon by later authors so as to present the *Führer* as an incarnation from the kingdom of Agarthi/Shambhala (see Miguel Serrano in this regard).
- In their best-seller *The Dawn of Magic*, Jacques Bergier and Louis Pauwells (1962) first claim that the Shambhala/Agarthi myth strongly influenced the founders of the national socialist movement.
- Robert Charroux (*Verratene Geheimnisse* [“Betrayed Secrets”]) presumes that Lama priests had gained influence over Hitler and worked on “ a plan for exercising control over the world which was thoroughly the equal of that of the Germans “ (Charroux, 170, p. 258).
- The anti-fascist myth researcher Friedrich Doucet (*Im Banne des Mythos* [In the Thrall of Myth], 1979) discusses “psycho-techniques of the monks and abbots in the Lama monasteries of Tibet” with which leading national socialist figures were manipulated.
- Likewise, the anthroposophically oriented author, Trevor Ravenscroft (*The Spear of Destiny*, 1974), assumes that Hitler cooperated with “Tibetan leaders” in Berlin.
- In the 80s, two books by the Chilean Miguel Serrano appeared (*El Cordon Dorado* [The Golden Ribbon] and *Adolf Hitler el último Avatara* [Adolf Hitler: The Final Avatar]). Both texts

form the basis for “esoteric Hitlerism”. One of Serrano’s central themes is the relationship between sexual magic and political power (especially national socialism). The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, whom Serrano has met several times, is woven by the author into the creation of neo-fascist myths around Hitler.

- According to Jan van Helsing (*Geheimgesellschaften und ihre Macht ...* [“Secret Societies and their Power”], 1993), Tibetan monks worked together with Templar Knights who were organized in the highest lodge of the “black sun” on the establishment of the Third Reich. The secret order had (and still has) an important base underground in the Himalayas. The ruler of the underground kingdom is said to be “Rigden Iyepo”, the king of the world, with his representative on the surface, the Dalai Lama.
- In *Die schwarze Sonne von Tashi Lhunpo* [The Black Sun of Tashi Lhunpo] (1996), McCloud reports on the survival of the national socialist Thule group in Tibet . They are the followers of a “sun oracle” there.
- For Wilhelm Landig (*Götzen gegen Thule ...* [Idols against Thule], n.d.), Tibet is also “the realm of the black sun! It is the meeting point of the esoteric circles of the *Schutzstaffel* [the SS], whose knowledge Mr. Himmler also knew about but did not share.”
- In his novel (*The Black Sun...*, 1997), Peter Moon reiterates the decisive influence of Tibetan Lamas on National Socialism and extends it with new images. He takes the side of the old Tibetan Bon religion, and accuses the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism of religious oppression.

“Why”, Martin Brauen, a pro-Lamaist expert on Tibet, asks in light of this considerable and by no means complete literature list, “does Tibet arouse the interest of the neo-fascists so much?” What makes Tibet so attractive for them? What is so fascinating about the Shambhala myth that it draws into its thrall both those who cultivate and those who combat it?” (Brauen, 2000, p. 93). He cannot answer this question. But in order to be able invert the fact that national socialism had a occult relationship to Tibetan Buddhism into its complete opposite, he foregrounds an anti-Lamaist faction within the German right-wing. It was precisely the Nazis, Brauen says, who denounced the Lamas and the Tibetans as “*Untermenschen*” (subhumans).

- Among the anti-Dalai Lama and anti-Tibet literature are works by S. Ipares (*Geheime Weltmächte* [Secret World Powers], 1937), who was influenced by the orientalist Albert Grünwedel. In his book, the author talks of an occult *hierarchia ordinis* of the Lamaist theocracy, which invisibly influences and steers the East.
- J. Strunk’s arguments (*Zu Juda und Rom — Tibet*, [To Juda and Rome — Tibet], 1937) are more far reaching; he tries to uncover a conspiracy of an international ecclesiastical elite (with members from all the world religions) with the living Buddha, the Dalai Lama from Lhasa as their visible head. “What there are of organizations and new spiritual currents running alongside and in all directions nearly always end up on the ‘roof of the world’, in a Lama temple, once one has progressed through Jewish and Christian lodges” (Strunk, 1937, p. 28).

- In the same year (1937) Fritz Wilhelmy published the piece *Asekha. Der Kreuzzug der Bettelmönche* [Asekha: The Crusade of the Mendicant Monks]. In it “Tibetan Buddhism ... [is] openly appointed to play a more than mysterious role in the great global hustle and bustle of suprate pullers of strings” (Wilhelmy 1937, p.17)
- General Ludendorff and his wife likewise took to the field with great vigor against the “Asian priests” and warned that the Tibetan Lamas had emplaced themselves at the head of Jewish and Jesuit secret orders (*Europa den Asiatenpriestern?* [Europe of the Asian priests]), 1941).
- Clearly the most prominent of the anti-Lamaist Nazi faction was the racist Alfred Rosenberg, who in his seminal work *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhundert* [The Myth of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century] made the battle between the priests and the warrior caste into the primal conflict of the history of the world. The Tibetan lamas appear here as the representatives of a decadent Asian Catholicism.

The problem with the construction of a fascist anti-Lamaism lies in the fact that apart from Alfred Rosenberg the right-wing authors cited definitely did not occupy positions of power like those of Himmler, the SS, and the *Ahnenerbe* project. “Hitler’s mythologist” (Rosenberg) was cut dead by Himmler and barely taken seriously by Hitler. The Ludendorff’s fell out of favor with the *Führer*. In contrast, the SS with their rites and their martial style increasingly became the epitome of the Nazi myth. It was the SS who explored Tibet and it was a former SS trooper (Heinrich Harrer) who schooled the Dalai Lama.

Besides this, the national socialist opponents of Lamaism mentioned, who Martin Brauen so demonstratively parades to prove that fascism was hostile towards Tibetan Buddhism, are just as fanatically fascinated by the atavistic mythology of Tibet as the pro-Lamaist fascists whom we have listed above. They do not attack the Lamaist system out of a democratic attitude or rational consideration, but the opposite, because they fear the occult world of the Lamas — namely, control by magic, the conquest of the planet by Buddhist despots, the manipulation of awareness through rituals, etc. — all concepts which can indeed be found in the tantric texts. Thus, right-wing opponents of Lamaism, just like the right-wing advocates of Lamaism, see in Tibet and its religion an occult control center.

Since the pro-Lamaist intellectuals can no longer deny that fascist authors increasingly sought out contact with Lamaist cultural images after the war, they emphatically reassure us that these were a matter of Western “illusions”, or at least Western hybrids of Lamaism which were in no sense just. With this they seem to think the problem is solved (in this regard, see Brauen 2000). But they leave us waiting for an examination of contents which reveals to what depth and extent ideas and practices from Lamaism have been directly incorporated by the fascist side. Yet a debate about the images, archetypes, metapolitical visions, political structures, and rituals from the Tibetan cultural sphere which the neo-Nazis refer back to is of far greater interest than the question of whether there was personal contact between lamas and Nazis. Here the actual work of cultural criticism begins, which entails

1. discovering Lamaist myths of origin behind the “Nazi fantasies”
2. investigating these Lamaist myths of origin
3. examining structural similarities between neo-fascism and Lamaism

Only then when such “myths of origin” are not to be found can the Nazi- Tibet connection be said to have been exposed as a purely Western fiction.

The following list of paradigms, concepts, theories, methods, and myths which have essentially shaped the culture of Lamaism (and still do) have become central for the neo-fascist movement:

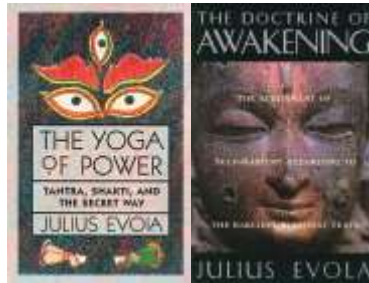
- The combination of religious and political power
- A strictly hierarchical state structure that rests upon a spiritually based “Führer principle”
- The out and out patriarchal orientation of the state and society
- A pattern of complete subordination of pupil to master
- The appearance of divine beings of earth to fulfill political missions (the avatar, incarnation, and Bodhisattva principle)
- A political micro-/macrocosmic theory according to which a Buddhist ruler represents a likeness of the entire universe.
- The idea of a world ruler (Chakravartin) and a violent conquest of the world
- The motif of spiritual/political redemption
- The idea of a superhuman center of power in Asia, from where an influence on world politics is exercised (the Shambhala myth)
- The legitimation of contemporary politics through mythic roots
- The derivation of political control from myths of the sun and light
- The myth of the “black sun” (Rahu myth in the *Kalachakra Tantra*)
- Alchemic speculations (as in the *Kalachakra Tantra*)
- An interest in secret men’s associations (members of orders)
- The existence of a supernatural community of “priestly warriors” (Shambhala warriors) who observe and influence the history of the world

- A “Buddhist” warrior ethic based upon spiritual control of the body and emotions
- An apocalyptic final battle, in which good and evil stand opposed and all nonbelievers are annihilated (Shambhala war)
- A fascination with the machinery of war (Shambhala myth)
- Flying discs (UFOs) — corresponding objects (flying wheels) will be put to use in the final Shambhala war
- A magical view of the world and the associated conception that the manipulation of symbols can affect history
- Techniques for manipulating consciousness
- A great interest in paranormal phenomena and their combination with politics (visions, oracles, prophecies)
- A magic/political understanding of the system of rituals in the service of the state
- Sexual magic practices for transforming erotic love and sexuality into worldly and spiritual power (*Kalachakra Tantra*)
- The functionalization of the feminine principle for the purposes of politico-religious power

All these pillars of Tibetan Buddhist culture are likewise ingredients of the *Kalachakra Tantra* constantly practiced by the Dalai Lama and the Shambhala myth this evokes. For centuries they have determined the form of Tibetan monastic society, completely independent of any Western imaginings or influence. Hence the question about neo-fascism's inordinate interest in Tibet and its atavistic culture is easily answered: fascists of the most varied persuasion see their own “political theology” confirmed by the Tibetan Buddhist religious system, or discover new images and practices in it with which they can enrich and extend their ideologies.

Some (not all) of the above-mentioned Tibetan cultural elements to which the new right has helped itself were also to be found in the Europe of old, yet these were either disempowered or relativized by the Enlightenment and “modernity” — only to be reactivated in the history of fascism and national socialism. In traditional Tibet (up until 1958), in the community of Tibetans in exile, but above all in the figure of the Dalai Lama and his clergy, in the holy texts and the rituals (the tantras), these images and archetypes were able to survive without pause. Through the active presence of the lamas in the West they are now visible and tangible once more and play an ever greater role in Western popular culture. Yet it is not just in comics and kitsch films that the Dalai Lama is portrayed as a god-king, but also both the respectable and the down-market western press, a label which gains fundamental significance in the political theology of fascism and is combined there with the *Führer* principle.[4]

## Julius Evola: A fascist Tantric



It was not just the ideologists and theoreticians of national socialism who were closely concerned with Tibet, but also high-ranking intellectuals and scholars closely linked to Italian fascism. First of all, Giuseppe Tucci, who attempted to combine Eastern and fascist ideas with one another, must be mentioned (Benavides 1995).

A further example is the work of the Italian, Julius Evola (1898-1974), for a time Benito Mussolini's chief ideologist (mainly in the forties). In numerous books and articles he has investigated and further developed the relationship between tantric rituals and power politics. He has followed "tantric trails" in European cultural history and come across them everywhere: among the Cathars, the troubadours, the Knights Templar, in the work of Alighieri Dante, the mysticism surrounding the holy grail, European knighthood, alchemy. Using criteria drawn from *Vajrayana*, he propounds a cultural history of sexuality in his most famous book, *Eros and the Mysteries of Love: The Metaphysics of Sex*. Evola was not just a theoretician, he also practiced sexual magic rites himself. There are unmistakable statements from him about the "tantric female sacrifice" and the transformation of sexuality into political power. Like almost no other, the Italian has openly named the events that unfold in the mysteries of the yogis and then confessed to them: "The young woman," he writes, "who is first 'demonized' and then raped, ... is essentially... the basic motif for the higher forms of tantric and Vajrayanic sexual magic" (Evola, 1983, p. 389). In dictators like Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini he saw the precursors of future *Maha Siddhas* who would one day conquer the world with their magic powers: "The magician, the ruler, the lord", he proclaims in regard to Tantrism, "that is the type of the culture of the future!" (Evola, 1926, p. 304). He recommends Tantrism as "the way for a Western elite" (Evola, *East and West*, p. 29).

In the Shambhala myth he sees a confirmation of the European tradition of the savior king, especially the myth of the grail: "At a particular time decreed by one of the cyclical laws, a new manifestation of the solar principle from above will occur in the form of a sacred ruler who gains victory over the 'dark age': Kalki Avatara. Symbolically Kalki will be born in Shambhala — one of the terms in the Indian/Tibetan tradition for the holiest hyperborean [Nordic] center" (Evola 1955, p. 56).

We could fill many pages illustrating the influence of Vajrayana (Tibetan Tantrism) on Evola's work. But however, we will instead concentrate on a detailed discussion of the ideas of one of his pupils, Miguel Serrano. Serrano combines Evola's fascist philosophy of power warriors with the national socialist thoughts on race. His works are particularly interesting for us not just because he is still alive (in 1999), but also because he has been linked with the Fourteenth Dalai Lama several times.

### **Miguel Serrano: The Dalai Lama's "friend" and chief ideologist of "esoteric Hitlerism"**

"Miguel Serrano", writes his interviewer, Isidro Palacios, "was the only [!] western foreigner who traveled to meet the Dalai Lama as the monk-emperor of the Tibetan Buddhists fled from the holy land of Tibet to the south because of the Chinese invasion. Our conversation partner [Serrano] traveled from India into the Himalayas where his meeting with the Dalai Lama took place, and since then a close friendship has existed between him and the now Nobel prize winner" (Palacios, 1990, p. 2). Who is this "close friend" of the *Kundun* then?

Miguel Serrano was born in Santiago, Chile in 1917. Between 1947 and 1948 he visited Antarctica for the first time, to which he later undertook many journeys. One of the massifs which he explored on an expedition there bears his name today. Between 1939 and 1945 he published the esoteric journal, *La Nueva Edad* [The New Age]. He was active as a diplomat for Chile in several countries, including India, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Austria. He also worked as an ambassador at the International Atomic Energy Commission in Vienna and at the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Largely unnoticed by the public, Serrano has been in friendly contact with numerous prominent national socialist and fascist figures since the seventies: with Léon Degrelle, Otto Skorzeny, Hans-Ulrich Rudel, Hanna Reitsch, Julius Evola, Herman Wirth, Savitri Devi, and the French *Waffen* SS man and author Saint Loup. The Chilean returned to his country of birth and lives some kilometers from Santiago (as of 1999).

He published numerous books with an occult/poetic content. Even his work best known in the West, in which he recounts his encounters with the German poet Hermann Hesse and the depth psychologist C. G. Jung, displays a great deal of occultist speculation when one reads it attentively. Serrano titled his book *The Hermetic Circle: Conversations, Correspondence, and Memories of Hermann Hesse and C. G. Jung*.<sup>[5]</sup> This title alone should signal that the author had formed an esoteric brotherhood with Jung and Hesse, a sort of triumvirate of magicians who had gained admittance to the archetypal storehouses of the human subconscious and are unique in the twentieth century. Jung was sympathetic towards the Chilean who had courted him. He wrote an effusive foreword to Serrano's tale, *The Visit of the Queen of Saba*: "This book is unusual. It is a dream amidst other dreams, one could say, and completely different to the spontaneous creations of the unconscious with which I am familiar" (Serrano, 1980, p. 7). Serrano was also a great admirer of the American poet, Ezra Pound, who sympathized with the Italian fascists. Together with Pound's widow (Olga Rudge) and Prince Ivanici, Serrano had a commemorative stone erected in Italy.

His occult studies took him to all parts of the world. He saw himself as a modern Percival (Parsifal) and Minnesinger, who went in search of the Grail under the protection of his diplomatic passport. “The life of an ambassador is a farce and a folly”, he said in an interview in the journal *Cedade*, “My post allows me to meet with people of value like the Dalai Lama, Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Hanna Reitsch (Hitler’s famous female war pilot) and others” (*Cedade*, 1986). Switzerland, Westphalia, the mountains of Salzburg, the Pyrenées, his travels in search of the Grail led him through all these “geomantically” significant sites, but likewise to the Himalayas, Patagonia, and Antarctica.

The Chilean was rightly considered the occult eminence of modern, international fascism. Meanwhile, his phantasmagoric writings have also developed a fanatic following in the German neo-nazi scene: It is the Chilean author’s obsessive intention to convince his readers that Adolf Hitler was an *avatar* (a divine incarnation) or a *tulku*, and ever will be, since he lives on in another body in another sphere, that of the kingdom of *Shambhala*. According to Serrano, the *Führer* will reappear as the doomsday ruler and fight a terrible battle, and that in the next few years. How did this bizarre fantasy arise?

Shortly after the Second World War a mysterious “master” from the beyond is supposed to have appeared to the Chilean and said to him: “Hitler is a initiate, he can communicate with those dwelling on the astral plane. I do not know who his spiritual leaders are, but I have decided to help him. Hitler is a being with an iron, unshakable will which he inevitably put into effect. He never yielded. I was in contact with him.” (Serrano, 1987, p. 21).

After this appearance of his spiritual guru, Serrano was absolutely convinced that he had been entrusted with the mission of the century: the worldwide dissemination of [\*Hitlerismo Esoterico\*](#) (of “esoteric Hitlerism”). Whilst still performing his international duties as a Chilean Ambassador he held himself back, although he carried the idea in his heart from the nineteen fifties on. During this period he published books of a poetic/esoteric content with several respectable western publishers which, although they without exception include tantric topics (especially the “female sacrifice”), studiously avoid mentioning the name of Adolf Hitler. Only in 1978 did the Chilean first dare to go public with an open profession of belief in the German Nazi dictator, and published *El Cordón Dorado — Hitlerismo Esoterico* [The Golden Ribbon — Esoteric Hitlerism]. In the mid-eighties the almost 650-page, large-format book, *Adolf Hitler, el Último Avatâra* [Adolf Hitler, the Last Avatar], followed. Serrano summarizes the results of his extensive occult research into this topic with the concise statement that, “esoteric Hitlerism is tantric” (Serrano, 1987, p. 330).

### ***Shambhala: The center of “esoteric Hitlerism”***

In the following sections, we hope to show just how much of his fascist world view Serrano owed to Tantrism. It is of especial interest in connection with this study that he recognized “esoteric Hitlerism” as a central doctrine from the kingdom of *Shambhala*: “In fact”, the author says,

"*Shambhala* is indeed the center of esoteric Hitlerism. The entrance to it [the realm of *Shambhala*] was to be found in the vicinity of Shigatse or near Gyantse [in southern Tibet]. Through my investigations I arrived at the conclusion that our center [i.e., that of Serrano's occult order] had also been located there. The connection between Hitlerism and the Tibetans or Mongolians was also not immediate, but indirect, in as far as they established contact with the Hyperboreans (the Aryan gods of the north) and made free passage and the transmission of physical messages possible. Tibetans and Mongolians were their vassals who had to guard the magic entry gates to their world. ... When I visited Berchtesgaden [the Obersalzberg to which Hitler retreated time and again], my attention was constantly captivated by a tellurian force, a tangible vibration in the air, which instantaneously linked this point with the Tibetan Himalayas and trans-Himalaya: *Hitler's* high-lying refuge with the Lhasa of the *Dalai Lama*, with *Shambhala*. For some particular reason, esoteric Hitlerism had chosen this point, which is full of direct connections, magnetic vibrations, and those which touch the stars, as the holy center of its order (the SS), and it had avoided letting a final physical struggle, which could have harmed this area, take place there" (Serrano, 1987, p. 32). In his book, *NOS*, Serrano defines the kingdom of *Shambhala* as "one of the hidden subterranean cities in which is performed the tantric initiation that transforms, transmutes and transfigures matter. There are people who say that it was the capital of *Agartha*" (Serrano, 1984, p. 186). Before *Shambhala* was relocated in the Himalayas by the hyperborean (Nordic) *siddhas*, it was a kingdom at the North Pole.

*Shambhala* and *Agartha* are thus the two occult regions (or cities) from which the national socialist dictator, Adolf Hitler, was sent to our planet. According to Serrano the two locations lie in a magic realm beneath the surface of the Earth. "Thus the submerged *Agartha* and *Shambhala* are to be found there, which the Tibetans and Mongolians speak of as the seat of the king of the world, and also the symbolic orient of the [Knights] Templar and the true Rosicrucians. Thus the unknown leaders of these two orders, as well the organization of esoteric Hitlerism [the SS], betook themselves there. And from there Hitler clearly received instructions" (Serrano, 1987, p. 32). [6]

Following the Second World War the rumor (which Serrano seizes upon thankfully) arose in occult circles that Hitler had settled a brotherhood of Tibetan lamas in Berlin, who stood in direct contact with the kingdom of *Shambhala*. After the Russians entered the city the members of the order committed suicide ( Ravenscroft, 1988, p. 262ff.).[7]

But Hitler — Serrano says- did not suicide; rather he was able to return to his subterranean home of *Shambhala*. "Hitler lives. He did not die in Berlin. I have seen him under the earth. ... I kept this secret for many years; then it was dangerous to reveal it, and it was even more difficult to write about it", the mysterious master we have already mentioned explained to his pupil, Serrano (Serrano, 1987, p. 37). The "Führer", however, did not flee to Tibet as is assumed in other occult speculations. Serrano doubts such assumptions, since on the basis of his researches he reached the conclusion that the mythic realm of *Shambhala* was relocated from the Himalayas to the South Pole (Antarctica) following the war and that today the entrance to the underground imperium may be found there. Hitler is thus said to have traveled to Antarctica.

In the near future, the “Führer” will ascend to earth from the subterranean *Shambhala* (now at the South Pole) for a second time, with a powerful army of UFOs in fact. (At another point Serrano reports that Hitler will lead his army on a white horse, like the *Rudra Chakrin*, the wrathful wheel turner from *Shambhala*.) The “last avatar” (Hitler) will plunge the planet into a terrible apocalyptic war between the forces of light (the hyperborean Aryan race) and the powers of darkness (the Jewish race). The Jews, who currently rule the world, will be exterminated and the Nazis will found the *Edidad Dorada* (the “golden age”) and the “Fourth Reich”.

Serrano took his “fantasies” literally. To seek his spiritual leader (or the *tulku* Hitler), the Chilean diplomat (in India at the time) set off and began exploring in the Himalayas and in Antarctica. “In the book *The Serpent of Paradise*, I describe my search for the ashram of the Siddha in the Himalayas, which is likewise to be found beneath the earth in the Kailash mountains, in a very remote area where my master’s residence also is” (Serrano, 1987, p. 40).[8] He was convinced that he would find an entrance to *Shambhala* or *Agartha* in the Kailash. He also tried to reach Lake Yamdrok, because he suspected there was an entrance gateway to the underground *Shambhala* there as well. But the Chinese turned him back at the border.

### EL/ELLA

But the time was not ripe, Serrano was unable to discover the entrance to *Shambhala*. In Kalimpong, “before the gates of Tibet” he encountered a “man” who assured the Chilean that a mysterious “order” exerts an influence over both the affairs of the distant past and the most recent events of world history. Obviously this *man* was the guru who — as he recounts in his key book *EL/ELLA* — initiated Serrano into the rites of sexual magic, and the *order* was a tantric secret society. Its members, the “man” said, “live in two cities in the Himalayas, *Agartha* and *Shambhala*. To get there one has to trace this (tantric) way back to the origin of time” (Serrano, 1982, p. 10).

The pupil (Serrano) — we read in *EL/ELLA* — is prepared to go this way and is initiated into the tantras and the “laws of androgyny” by the master: “This knowledge has been passed on to us by the serpent [*kundalini*] that survived on the ocean floor as the world of the god-men was destroyed, in which the woman was not outside but rather inside and where man and woman were one. .... Until you are one with the woman ... you will be no priest king ... The stallion must become a mare, the man a woman ...” the guru continued his teaching (Serrano, 1982, pp. 11-12).[9]

This is never, the pupil learns, possible through chastity and asceticism. Rather, the man must encounter the woman in the “magic love” in order to divert her feminine energies. As we know, this requires absolute control over the sexual act and above all the retention of the seed: “If the stallion expels the seed, he becomes impoverished by this. ... For as long as the seed flows outwards like a river, the play of the deceptive appearances will continue” (Serrano, 1982, p. 13). In another text it says: “the magic love that is taught in ... *Shambhala*. ... In it the seed may not be issued outwardly and be lost in the woman, rather it must flow inwardly into the body of its owner

in order to impregnate him with the androgyne, ... as one in the likewise symbolic language of alchemy" (Serrano, 1987, p. 289). If the man does not expel his sperm he can absorb the woman's *gynergies* completely. "If the woman does not receive", Serrano says, "she gives! Through her skin she exudes substances, a concentrated energy, which satiates you and penetrates into your blood and heart" (Serrano, 1982, p. 14).

But it can happen that the tantric experiment fails. If the sadhaka (the pupil) loses his seed during the magic sexual act then he is destroyed by the aggressive femininity: "The spider devours the male who fertilizes her, the bees murder the drones, the fearsome mother wears the organ of generation tied around her neck. Everything female devours, every mare, mother, goddess, or woman. In one way or another the man is consumed" (Serrano, 1982, p. 13).

It is thus a matter of life and death. Ultimately, according to Serrano the "killing" of the *external* woman (the *karma mudra*) is therefore necessary, so that the *inner* woman (the *maha mudra*) can be formed. The author does not shrink from discussing the "tantric female sacrifice" directly: "Only those who are able to love the woman so much [!] that they externally kill her [!] in order to make possible her inner rebirth will find the immortal city of *Agartha* (or *Shambhala*)" (Serrano, 1982, p. 13).[10] For an uninformed reader hidden, but obvious to one who knows the logic of Tantrism, a tantric female murder is described in both of his initiatory writings, *EL/ELLA* [HE/SHE] and *NOS* [WE].

In a love scene from *EL/ELL*, a young woman expires in Serrano's arms in order to then re-emerge within him as an inner *maha mudra*. He bends over her, strokes her hair and kisses her bloody lips: "They tasted like bitter honey, and he swallowed a little of her blood" Then he suddenly sees the stigmata: "Strangely, it [the blood] was only on her feet and the palms of her hands as if she had been crucified. 'Here!', she said. She indicated her side, at breast level. A white line seemed to run through it, like a spear wound" (Serrano, 1982, pp. 72-73). The references to the sacrifice of Christ are obvious, indeed they seem quite blatant. "When I die," the woman then says, "you will bear me within you; I will be you, live in you ... You have drunk my blood, and we are now two siblings. My character is already being transferred into your blood ... If god will, I shall love you even more when I am dead. ... I have to die that you may live" (Serrano, 1982, pp. 73-74). With this she fulfills the wise saying of Serrano's master: "The decay of the one [the woman] is the purification of the other [the man]" (Serrano, 1982, p. 93). "The absolute woman", he says at another point, "can sleep or she can die, which is the same thing" (Serrano, 1987, p. 289).

Written in a fantasy manner, the book *NOS — Book of the Resurrection* also depicts a tantric female sacrifice. The heroine of this "hermetic biography" is called Allouine, the main hero is admittedly Serrano. Additionally, various "tantric" masters crop up. Among them are, unmistakably, C.G. Jung, Hermann Hesse, and the American poet Ezra Pound. The contents of the book depict the voluntary self-sacrifice of Allouine, her interiorization as a *maha mudra* by the author (Serrano), and the latter's achievement of immortality through the absorption of *gynergy*.

"The woman dies. She is dead. She must die. ... She is the warrior's [the yogi's] companion, existing only in his mind, in his spirit" (Serrano, 1984, p. 11), Serrano instructs us once more. "She [the woman] becomes interiorized in you through her death, she inspires you", one of his masters explains to him and in another passage continues: "The secret path of yoga along which you are traveling is only for the warrior, for the initiated hero. It is not the path for the woman; because a woman has no chakras, no *kundalini* to awaken. ... A woman is the Kundalini. A woman has no soul. She is the soul. A woman has no eternity. She is eternity" (Serrano, 1984, pp. 102, 147).

Serrano stages a tantric séance with Allouine, in which they both consume the five forbidden foods. Then he drinks "the liquor of orgasm ... the heavenly Soma, an spirit of secret wine ... which is now only to be found in the river of your blood" (Serrano, 1984, p. 112). We know that he is talking about the *sukra*, the mixture of male and female seed, of menstrual blood and sperm. This magic potion grants the Tantric immortality. In *NOS* too the author longs for the blood of his lover like a vampire and goes into raptures if he detects it on his lips. After he has washed the dying Allouine, he kisses her and drinks of her blood.

Yet Allouine patiently and will-lessly accepts her sacrifice: "My desire for you (i.e., for Serrano) is reaching its peak. The fire of sacrifice has already been lit in my vulva and beats there like a heart. ... My will no longer exists" (Serrano, 1984, p. 111). "The authentic, absolute woman sacrifices herself voluntarily," we read in *NOS*, "immolating herself in order to give her eternity to her lover. ... The beloved is now the hidden beloved, she who has died and buried herself in your bones and your veins. The female Sophia, guru of the soul, she who courses through the blood, the female philosopher, Sophia, wisdom, the dove, gnosis" (Serrano, 1984, pp. 147-148). Dying, his "wisdom consort" says to him, "I shall but love thee better after death. I give you my eternity. ... My beloved, you will be my coffin of perfumed, precious wood!" (Serrano, 1984, p. 140).

After he has internalized Allouine within himself, the Tantric Serrano can now overcome his EGO, he can now talk of NOS (WE), since his lover (*maha mudra*) will dwell in him for ever. Through this love, deadly for the woman, the man gains eternal life. In this context, Serrano plays upon the word AMOR, which does not just mean love, but also A-MOR, i.e., beyond death.

Eternally united with Allouine's *gynergy* following her physical death, Serrano buries her corpse and places a stone at her grave into which he has chiseled a leftward hooked cross, the supreme symbol of "esoteric Hitlerism".

### ***Hitler as a tantric and as king of the world (Chakravartin)***

From Serrano's tantric world view it is only all too easy to assume that Hitler (as a *tulku*) also conducted sexual magic practices with a wisdom consort (*mudra*). Eva Braun, the lover of the dictator appears to have only partially performed this duty. Behind her, Serrano says, stood a

greater one: “We must thus consider the relationship with Eva Braun to have been like that between Jesus and Mary Magdalene in the Christian legend, like that of an alchemist to his mystic sister. ... The presence of the woman, her telepathic, self-communicating energy, the tensions this generates are indispensable for a tantric magician, for this kind of bearer of power. The mystic consort of Hitler was, however, not Eva Braun, but rather another” (Serrano, 1987, p. 25). He refers to her as the “Valkyrie” or as *Lilith* too. With the name *Lilith* he draws a connection to *Adam*. Like Hitler, the biblical first father of humanity (*Adam*) also possessed two women, an outer *Eve* and an inner *Lilith*. Did Hitler perhaps make an decisive tantric mistake, asks the author, in marrying *Eva Braun* (shortly before his suicide)? “... Since the secret *Eve* [Braun] of transient flesh and blood was accepted, she now [took] the place of the mystic consort” (Serrano, 1987, p. 25), and Hitler lost part of his magic powers (*siddhis*).

According to Serrano the “Führer” of the Third Reich was a tantra master from *Shambhala*, the “high priest of the occident” (Serrano, 1987, p. 269) He came to earth to fulfill a mission — the control of the world by the Nordic (“hyperborean”) race. But in him Serrano does not just see the incarnation of a warlike archetype who lowered himself into a human frame in the nineteen-thirties and forties. In the dictator he directly recognized a *tulku* and god sent from *Shambhala*. Hitler “was a highly developed being, a Bodhisattva, a tulku ... the incarnation of a deity” (Serrano, n.d., p. 119).

Just as a *tulku* need not only appear in the form of a single person, but can rather produce many emanations of his self, so too the various fascist national “Führers” of the first half of our century were the emanations of the mightiest central *tulku* and *Shambhala* prince, Adolf Hitler: Benito Mussolini in Italy; Oliveira Salazar in Portugal; Leon Degrelle in Belgium; José Antonio Primo de Rivera in Spain; Plinio Salgado in Brazil; Doriot in France; Jorge González von Marée in Chile; and Subhash Chandra Bose in India. All the fascist energy of the world was concentrated in the German “Führer” (Hitler): “The tulku”, says Serrano, “ — in this case it is Hitler — radiates out from a center of higher power, which like an enormous sun absorbs everything and draws it into his fire and his fate. If HE falls, then all the others fall too, then HE is of course ALL [of them]” (Serrano, 1987, p. 270).

According to Serrano Hitler must also be seen as the earthly appearance of the *Chakravartin*: “For the initiates of the SS Hitler was that mysterious prophet or magician who ... would restore the sense of royal dignity, where the king of the world is the emperor, the priest of priests and king of kings; it is the leader, who will establish a new golden age for a thousand years and more” (Serrano, 1987, p. 354). This is clearly intended for the future, since— according to Serrano — Hitler will soon return once more to fulfill his cosmic mission. One may think what one will of such prognoses, but it is in any case amazing what a large upturn fascist movements have achieved worldwide since the end of the eighties.

### ***The SS as a tantric warrior order from Shambhala***

For Serrano the tantric initiation is the central rite of a “hyperborean” (Nordic) warrior caste. *Shambhala* counts as the supreme mystery site for the initiation of the “priest-warriors”. “In *Shambhala*”, the author says, “the use of the force through which the mutation of the earth and the people can be carried out is taught, and the latter [the people] are introduced into the *martial* initiation, which makes this possible. ... Those who follow this initiatory stream have struggled to found a new/old order here on the present-day earth which has its roots in the transcendent origins, with the goal of reawakening the golden age, and they will fight on to the end...” (Serrano, 1987, p. 258). [11]

This order is the secret brotherhood of the *Shambhala* officers, who have for centuries been incarnated in our world — for instance as knights of the holy grail or as Rosicrucians or finally as the occult elite of the SS, Hitler’s notorious *Schutz-Staffel*. “Once a year”, we learn, “the inner circle of the SS people met with their supreme leaders for a few days of retreat, the solitude, and meditation. A kind of western yoga was practiced here, but nothing is known about it” (Serrano, 1987, pp. 171-172).

According to Serrano the SS were divided into two sections, an inner esoteric one and an outer one. The “exoteric SS” were selected to “be able to deal with the most difficult tasks and adventures in the external world”. “Nothing of the esoteric of the black order, its practices and teachings, its invisible connections and its occult doctrines was known” to them (Serrano, 1987, p. 264). The “inner circle” of the SS consisted of “sun people, supermen, god-men, the total human, the human magician” (Serrano, n.d., p. 96). The esoteric SS were *siddhas* (magicians) from the underground kingdom of *Shambhala*, or at least their messengers. In German, SS are the initials of the “black sun” (“*schwarze Sonne*”), and Serrano did also call the members of the order “the men of the black sun”. We are reminded that the planet of darkness, *Rahu*, which darkens the sun and moon, is also referred to in the *Kalachakra Tantra* as the black sun.

The author is convinced, of course, that sexual magic rites were practiced in the SS (the “new aristocracy of the Aryan race”). Like Julius Evola before him, the Chilean makes constant references in his writings to how sexuality may be converted into high-quality aggressive military energy and political power through tantric practices: “Come and take me like a *warrior!*”, a lover (his *karma mudra*) says to him at one stage in his key novels, “I give you my heart for you to devour. Let us drink our blood” (Serrano, 1982, p. 54). In *EL/ELLA* the author recommends to heroes initiated into the tantras that “the *warrior* should give death the face of his lover; the fiery femininity of death will be thus evoked” (Serrano, 1982, p. 87). For Serrano, tantric practices and the cult life of a fascist/esoteric warrior caste are one.

Additionally, the sexual magic of the SS was connected with racial experiments. These aimed at a mutation of the human race, or better, a regaining of the formerly high-standing Aryan god-men who had in the dim and distant past tarnished themselves through “ordinary” sexual intercourse with human women and produced a lesser race. According to Serrano, such experiments were conducted in the Wewelsburg, the occult center of the SS. “Laboratories of leftward magic” for

the re-creation of the original, pure Aryan race were to be found there (Serrano, n.d. pp. 488, 589). But these were nothing more than the above-ground branches of corresponding establishments in subterranean *Shambhala*. “ In *Shambhala* they attempted to produce a mutation of their kind which would allow them to return to that which they were before their interbreeding with the sons of man...” — when they still had a white, almost transparent body and blonde hair (Serrano, 1982, p. 54).

As Tantrics, the SS were “beyond good and evil” and for this reason their “terrible deeds” were justified by Serrano, plus that they took place at higher cosmic command (Serrano, 1987, p. 331). The “final solution to the question of the gypsies” (many gypsies perished in the concentration camps), for example, is said to have come directly “from Tibet to Hitler, certainly from *Shambhala*”. The gypsies used to live in *Shambhala* and had then been driven out of there. “The reasons for this”, says Serrano, “were known in the Tibet of the Dalai Lama” (Serrano, 1987, p. 366).

Just like the Knights Templar, the inner occult core of the SS were incarnations of the guardians of the holy grail, and “the grail of the siddhas [the magicians], of the solar and martial initiations” is to be found in *Shambhala* (Serrano, 1987, p. 264). The miracles which radiated from the grail were evident in the achievements of the black order in the course of the Second World War: “If one examines the achievements of the followers of Hitler in all areas of creation within a period of just six years, one cannot avoid admiring this miracle and making a comparison with the Templar order. And one comes to believe that the SS have likewise found the grail and even deciphered it” (Serrano, 1987, p. 278). Even the monumental architecture of the Third Reich is supposed to have been prepared on the building sites of *Shambhala*. The Hyperboreans (the gods of the north), we may read, “emigrated to two secret cities in the Himalayas, *Agartha* and *Shambhala*. ... In *Shambhala* they practiced the magic of the giants which made the monumental buildings possible” (Serrano, 1982, p. 54).

In the Second World War the forces of light and the “sun race” (Hitler and the SS) stood opposed to the forces of darkness and the “moon race” (the Allies and the Jews). It was no ordinary war, but rather a global battle between the gods (the Nazis, the light Aryan race) and demons (the Jews, the dark Semitic race), between *Odin*, the highest god of the Germanic peoples, and *Jehovah*, the highest god of the Jews. The Nordic (hyperborean) heroes fought the “lord of darkness”, the “satanic demiurge”. At heart, Serrano says, the patriarchal and matriarchal powers were at war.

Admittedly Hitler outwardly lost the war, but through his sacrifice and his example he saved the ideals of the warrior caste from *Shambhala*. He shall return at the head of his “wild army” to finally liberate the white race from the lord of darkness (*Jehovah*). It will then come to a terrible final battle. “These are the dimensions of Hitler, the envoy of the hyperborean [Nordic] siddhas, the tulku, the Bodhisattva, the Chakravartin, the Führer of the Aryans, so that the demiurge *Jehovah* has to mobilize all his earthly and extraterrestrial legions” (Serrano, n.d., p. 50).

One may well dismiss Serrano's visions as the product of an overactive imagination, but it cannot be denied that modern fascism has found a home and a predecessor in the *Shambhala* myth and in Tantrism. Its mythological conceptions and visions of power can without difficulty be brought into harmony with the practice and political ideology of the *Kalachakra Tantra* for all fundamental issues. The occult right wing's move toward Tibetan Buddhism is thus in no way to be understood as the exploitation of the *dharma* for ignoble purposes, since there is a profound inner relatedness between these two ways of looking at the world.

### **The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Serrano**

Naturally, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama would simply dismiss any link between the *Shambhala* myth and *Kalachakra Tantra* and the "esoteric Hitlerism" of Serrano, regardless of how closely matched even the conceptual principles of the two systems may be. Nonetheless, it is of great interest to our culturally critical study that the *Kundun* met with the racist Chilean several times (in at least 1959, 1984, and 1992). When His Holiness visited Chile in the year 1992, he was greeted at the airport by, among others, the leader of the *National Socialist Party of Chile* — Miguel Serrano by name. The principal ideologue of *Esoteric Hitlerism* told the reporters present that he and the hierarch from Tibet had been good "friends" since his time in India (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 302). Serrano was also a friend of the German living in India whom we have so often cited, Lama Govinda, in whose meditation tower with a view of the Himalayan mountains he was able to immerse himself.

The first encounter with the *Kundun* took place in 1959. In his own account, the founder of "esoteric Hitlerism" was the sole foreigner to greet the Dalai Lama as he crossed the Indian border after his flight from Tibet. "Shortly before the taking of Tibet by Mao's troops", he reports in his own words, "the Dalai Lama succeeded in fleeing to India. I journeyed into the Himalayas to wait for him there. I donned Tibetan clothes which the Maharaja of Sikkim had given me so as to attempt to get to Tibet from there. I made it to the Tibetan border, where — incidentally — I made the acquaintance of one of Roerich's sons who also gave me a report of the hidden city lying in the mountains (*Shambhala*). The at that time still very young Dalai Lama later, when everything was over, gave me a small Tibetan dog, as a sign of his gratitude" (Palacio, 1990, p. 4).

It is at any rate interesting that the *Kundun*, who was introduced to western culture by a member of the SS (Heinrich Harrer), meets as the first (!) Westerner after his crossing of the Indian border the fascist Miguel Serrano, who sees a mythic command from the kingdom *Shambhala* at the esoteric core of the SS. Serrano says of himself: "I was employed as a tool and continue to be used" (Cedade, 1986). We may recall that upon crossing the border, the Dalai Lama gave vent to the cry of "Victory to the gods!". The gods that Serrano represented and as whose tool he served were *Wotan*, *Odin*, and, in his own words, *Adolf Hitler*.



***Miguel Serrano and the XIV. Dalai Lama in Santiago de Chile (1992)***

As far as the “enchanted” Tibetan temple bitch of “honey yellow color” which was given him by the *Kundun* is concerned, this creature had a most special significance for the Chilean. The lamas, the author says, referred to the petite race as the “lion of the back door of the Temple”. Serrano’s “back door lion” was called *Dolma*, “the name of a Tibetan goddess; in truth the *shakti*” (Serrano, n.d., p. 189). *Dolma* is the Tibetan name for the goddess *Tara*. As abstruse as it may sound, after some time the Chilean recognized in the *Dolma* given him by the *Kundun* the reincarnation of a woman whom he once loved as a “mystic partner” and who (in accordance with the laws of the “tantric female sacrifice”) had had to die (Serrano, n.d., p. 189). As *Dolma* the bitch one day passed away in his arms — Serrano had flown from Spain to Vienna just to accompany her into eternity — he recalled an event of mythological dimensions from the 16th century. As if he were in a trance he suddenly felt that it was not the Tibetan *Dolma* but rather the dying sister of the last Aztec emperor Montezuma, Papán by name, whom he held in his arms. Papán — Serrano claimed — originally a high priestess from the north (“Hyperborea”), had in Mexico prophesied — according to legend — the return of the white gods to America. In her final hour, *Dolma* (the bitch) radiated out the energy of the Aztec princess who had to suffer a ritual sacrificial death.

Thanks to this vision Serrano could once more experience the fascination which habitually flooded through him at the embrace of dying women, even if one of them had this time been incarnated in a bitch. In *NOS*, a dying dog (the fate of *Dolma* probably lies behind this) spoke to him like a tantric lover with a human voice: “You don’t need me outside anymore. I will howl inside you, like my brother the wolf” (Serrano, 1984, p. 21).

Such central “hermetic” experiences naturally tied the Chilean to the *Kundun* and his tantric world view profoundly and so it is also not surprising that Serrano linked “esoteric Hitlerism” and the fate of Germany to the Dalai Lama directly: His “skill”, the author says of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, is “closely linked to that of Hitler’s Germany ... on account of yet undiscovered connections. A few years after Germany, Tibet also fell” (Serrano, 1987, p. 366).

The Chilean did not yet know about the SS past of Heinrich Harrer, the *Kundun*’s “best friend” and teacher, since this first became known in 1997 in connection with the film *Seven Years in Tibet*. But we can be certain that this fact would have been cited by him as further evidence to justify an occult *connection* between *Shambhala* and the SS, between the *Dalai Lama* and *Adolf Hitler*, particularly as the Chilean indicates at many points in his writings that the SS sent “secret missions” to Tibet in order to search for traces of the Aryan race there.

Serrano allows himself to be celebrated as the “Führer” of the *National Socialist Party of Chile*. His calendar commences with the year of Adolf Hitler’s birth in 1889. He describes “esoteric Hitlerism” as the “new religion of the young heroes and future warriors and priests, the true myth of the coming century” (*Cedade*, 1986). In 1989, on the 100th anniversary of Hitler’s birth (the year 100 for Serrano) a commemorative celebration was staged at which the Chilean and representatives of “esoteric Hitlerism” from various countries (Chile, Spain, Italy, Germany) spoke: “On the peak of a mountain in the Andes ranges which dominates Santiago,” the Chilean newspaper, *La Epoca*, writes, “and to the sounds of the *Ride of the Valkyrie* from Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*), some 100 Chilean followers and foreigners commemorated Adolf Hitler in yesterday’s evening twilight and promised that in the new Hitlerist age the continuing triumph of his ideas would proceed from Chile. ... Hitler, Serrano opined, would be resurrected from in the Andes (‘Andes’ means ‘perfected, total human’) and he would do like the *Caleuche* [a mystic hero of Chile, whose name means ‘the man who returns’] and introduce the age of Hitler” (*Epoca*, April 21, 1989). This event should not be underestimated on the basis of the small number of participants. For Serrano it had a ritual/symbolic significance and was reported in detail in the German neo-Nazi scene, for example.

In fascist circles worldwide, Serrano is a “hot tip” and his bizarre visions do in fact exercise a fascinating attraction on many young people. His nazi books are openly offered for sale in all South American countries. The German translation of [\*Cordón Dorado Hitlerismo Esoterico\*](#) is available as a hardback (*Das goldene Band — esoterischer Hitlerismus*). Highly sought after copies of the other works (about Hitlerism) in German translation and individual propaganda essays are in circulation and passed from hand to hand. “Serrano’s mystical neo-Nazism ... [has] a distinct appeal to the younger generation”, writes the historian Goodrick Clark, “Here Nazism becomes a pop mythology, severed from the historic context of the Third Reich. The Gnostic Cathars, Rosicrucian mysteries, Hindu Avatars, and extraterrestrial gods add a sensational and occult appeal to powerful myths of elitism, planetary destiny, and the cosmic conspiracy of the Jews that culminate in a global racist ideology of white supremacism. ... Books by Serrano ... are now circulating among neo-pagans, Satanists, skinheads, and Nazi metal music fans in the United States, Scandinavia, and Western Europe” (Goodrick Clark, 1998, pp. 221-222). The Dalai Lama has never distanced himself from Serrano. Instead of decisively opposing fascism in any country,

he recently called for the former Chilean State President and fascist, Augusto Pinochet, to be spared a trial.

In the following chapter, we shall introduce a further case where Tantric Buddhism, the *Shambhala myth*, and the Dalai Lama have acted as godfather to a modern, extremely radical and aggressive form of fascism. A case which shook the world community — we mean the story of the Japanese *doomsday guru*, Shoko Asahara.

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### Footnotes:

[1] See Martin Brauen, *Traumbild Tibet — Westlicher Trugbilder* [„Ideal Tibet — Western Illusions“], Bern 2000.

[2] Clearly under the impression that the *swastika* would become the emblem of national socialism, a moral category was introduced in that one distinguished between the hooked crosses which are turned to the right and those to the left. The left is supposed to produce evil, the right good (Doucet, 197, p. 74). Without doubt this is based upon misinformation. In the Tibetan ritual system both forms of swastika are common.

[3] Sünner does not name the author, yet it can only have been Ernst Schäfer. This is apparent from the following quotation from Hans Jürgen Lange: “According to his unpublished memoirs that are still in Berlin in the possession of his widow, Ernst Schäfer is said to have witnessed how Wiligut fell into a trance with rolled-back eyes in the Caspar-Theiyl-Strasse. A trance which Schäfer compared with the transported state of the foot messengers in the Tibetan highlands which he had already seen in his previous research trips (in 1930-32 and 1934-36)” (Lange 1998, p. 68).

[4] Historical fascism’s contact with Japanese Zen Buddhism is the topic of Brian Victoria’s book, *Zen at War*. Victoria’s historical critique reveals that it was not just Shintoism that was characterized by a militaristic world view based on a strong and pervasive concept of the enemy but also Japanese Buddhism in the first half of the last century. With very few exceptions (which Victoria highlights) the Japanese Buddhists professed to the fascistoid system of their state. Even such an undisputed authority in the west as D.T. Suzuki can be counted among them. There was hardly a Buddhist “personality” (the Soto, Rinzai, Shin, Nichirin schools) which did not enthusiastically bring its religious conceptions into line with the dominant system. “Warrior Zen” — “The Unity of Zen and Sword” — “Buddhism of the Imperial Way” — “Imperial Zen” — “Soldier Zen” — “Samurai Zen”; these were the slogans of the time. After the war the martial stance of the Buddhist schools was only hesitantly reviewed. It also partly survived and finds its place in the ideology of Japanese “Corporate Zen”.

[5] The German-language Rascher publishing house in Zurich did not accept the title as such as it feared the book would not attract buyers by sounding too occult. They decided

upon *Meine Begegnungen mit C.G. Jung und Hermann Hesse in visionärer Schau* [My encounters with C.G. Jung und Hermann Hesse from a visionary point of view].

[6] The labels of *Agartha* and *Shambhala* also lead to some confusion in a best-seller novel in right wing circles with the title of *The Black Sun of Tashi Lunpho* (by Russel McCloud). Here too there is a national socialist secret society in close contact with the Tibetan lamas. Its members are, however, known as the followers of *Agartha*, whilst their opponents rally around *Shambhala*. In the world of appearances, the followers of *Shambhala* are representatives of western big business and Freemasonry.

[7] Those concerned were most probably a scattered group of Kalmyks who had sided with the Germans in the struggle against the Soviet Union and had been driven back to the capital at the end of the war. But the myth that leading national socialist figures had maintained a connection to Lamaist sects (the “Berlin — Lhasa axis”) has survived to this day and is the topic of a voluminous occult Literature.

[8] According to Serrano “the Siddha or god-man [is] ... the self freed from the influence of the stars, the stellar influences no longer touch him, he is *Chakravartin*, king of the world” (Serrano, 1987, p. 289).

[9] Serrano was initiated into the Tantras of the *Kaula*, a Shivaite order. Yet the initiation scenarios from his books which we describe here are completely in keeping with *Vajrayana*. Serrano is not very fussy about distinguishing between the Hindu and Buddhist Tantra tradition. For him it is a matter of the *principle* behind the Tantric initiation and he finds this to the same extent among the Buddhists and the Hindus. Tantrism is for him an esoteric world cult which he discovers among the Egyptians, the Knights Templar, the Cathars, the Rosicrucians and the secret societies behind Hitler (the Thule society). At any rate, he sees in *Shambhala* and *Agartha* the two mythic points of origin from which the Tantras come.

[10] Serrano often uses the labels *Agartha* and *Shambhala* as if they were synonymous. On p. 257 of his book *The Golden Ribbon* he writes: “Some are of the opinion that Shambhala is the capital of Agartha.”

[11] Serrano regards Julius Evola and, oddly enough, Herrmann Hesse as well as the two teachers who first made him aware of the warlike spirit of Buddhism: “I am indebted to both that I got to know Buddhism as a way of the warrior. Evola explains that the religion of the Gautama is principally a warlike teaching which came from a prince who belonged to the Indian warrior caste, the Kshatriyas” (Palacio, 1990, p. 11).

## 13. THE JAPANESE DOOMSDAY GURU SHOKO ASAHARA AND THE XIV. DALAI LAMA

On March 20, 1995 there was a poison gas attack in Tokyo's underground system that killed a number of people and injured around 5,500 further victims and shook the world public. It was a sect leader, Shoko Asahara, who gave the command. Asahara was born in 1955 as the son of a large Japanese family. As he could barely see, he had to attend a school for the blind. After finishing school he tried without success to gain admittance to Tokyo University. In the following years he became involved in Asian medicine and started to practice various yoga exercises. He married in 1978. This marriage produced six children. The first spiritual group, which he founded in 1984, was known as *AUM Shinsen-no-kai*, that is, "AUM — Group of the mountain ascetics".

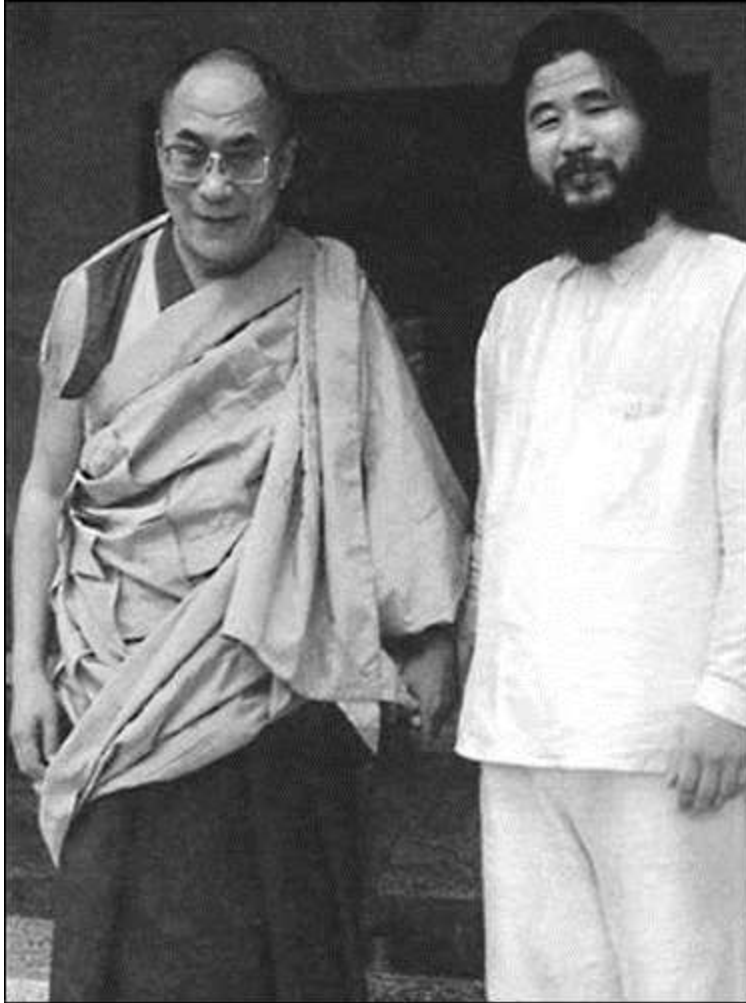
### Shoko Asahara's relationship to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama

The „mystic“ history of the AUM sect began in India in 1986. Shoko Asahara had wandered through the southern slopes of the Himalayas for weeks visiting Buddhist monasteries. This journey was supposed to mark the end of years of pilgrimage through the most varied esoteric landscapes: „I tried all kinds of practices such as Taoism, Yoga, Buddhism, incorporating their essence into my training. My goal was supreme spiritual realization and enlightenment. I continued the austere practices with Buddhist texts as my only resort. Finally, I reached my goal in the holy vibration of the Himalayas. I attained supreme realization and enlightenment. [...] I also acquired supernatural powers“ (Asahara, 1991, vol. 2, p. 13). Upon returning to Japan he changed the name of his yoga group and called it *AUM Shinrikyo*, which means roughly „AUM — Doctrine of the absolute truth“. From this point on, Asahara's world view was shaped by the compassionate ethos of *Mahayana* Buddhism: „I could not bear the fact that only I was happy and the other people were still in the world of suffering. I began to think: I will save other people at the sacrifice of my own self. I have come to feel it is my mission. I am to walk the same path as Buddha Shakyamuni“ (Asahara, 1991, vol. 2, p. 13).

But the Himalayas did not yet loose their hold over him. Almost a year later, in February 1987, Shoko Asahara stood before the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. He was received by the supreme *Kalachakra* master in person. He probably first met him in the year 1984, as His Holiness conducted a ceremony in Tokyo at the invitation of the Agon-shu sect. Asahara was at this stage still a member of this religious community.

The Japanese would later report the following of his meeting in Dharamsala: "Imagine my delight at being able to meditate with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, ... And in His Holiness's private meditation room! 'I'll sit here where I always sit; you sit there,' he instructed me. 'Let me give you a Buddha image.' ... After a few minutes of loud, deep breathing, all traces of the Dalai Lama vanished. He must have completely stopped his breath. At that moment, the astral vision of the

golden face of Shakyamuni Buddha radiated from my *ajuna chakra*. The vision persisted steadily, without a flicker. 'Ah, this is the Buddha image the Dalai Lama was talking about,' I thought. I continued my meditation" (Bracket, 1996, p. 68). Smiling, the Dalai Lama then took his leave of him after an intensive exchange of ideas with the following words: "Dear friend, ... Look at the Buddhism of Japan today. It has degenerated into ceremonialism and has lost the essential truth of the teachings. ... If this situation continues, ... Buddhism will vanish from Japan. Something needs to be done" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 13). Thereupon the god-king entrusted him with a spiritual mission: "You should spread real Buddhism there [in Japan]. ... You can do that well, because you have the mind of a Buddha. If you do so, I shall be very pleased. It will help me with my mission" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 13). Asahara was indeed more than happy. Afterwards, His Holiness blessed him with water and posed for a photo with him. Eight years later this photo was to appear in all the newspapers of the world. From now on, the Japanese guru referred to himself as a pupil of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. The god-king's final version of affairs is different. He never commissioned the Japanese to do anything at all, nor established any special relation with him, and definitely did not take him on as a *sadhaka*. For him Asahara was just one of the many hundreds of worshippers and visitors whom he met with in the course of a year. After the fact, His Holiness made a critical pronouncement with reference to the Japanese guru, which he obviously took to apply to others, but not himself: "I am suspicious of miracles and supernatural powers. Believers in Buddhism should not rely too much on a specific leader. This is unhealthy" (*Tibetan Review*, May 1995, p. 9).



***The Dalai Lama and Shoko Asahara***

But Asahara was not a complete *nobody* for the god-king. According to the German magazine, *Stern*, they had met five times since 1987 (*Stern* 36/95, p. 126). Amazingly, weeks after the first poison gas attack, His Holiness still called the guru a “friend, although not necessarily a perfect one” (*Stern* 36/95, p. 126). Then a document from 1989 came to light in which the *Kundun* thanked the AUM sect for donations and confirmed that they “encouraged public awareness through religious and social activities” (*Focus* 38/95, p. 114). On January 21, 1989 Asahara had sent the sum of \$100,000 to Dharamsala for the assistance of Tibetan refugees. As a kind of service in return he received an official note from the *Council for religious and cultural affairs of His Holiness the Dalai Lama* in which one can read: “To the best of our knowledge, AUM attempts to promote public well-being through various religious and social activities, for example through instruction in Buddhist doctrines and yoga” (*Focus* 38/95, p. 116–117).

On February 8, Asahara wrote back: “It is my fervent wish that Tibet will return to the hands of the Tibetans in the near future. I am willing to do whatever I can to be of help” (Shimatsu, I). The Japanese guru’s gratitude is only too easy to understand, then with the aforementioned note in his hand he succeeded in being recognized as a religious body by the Japanese administration and thus exempt from taxes.

Admittedly there was a certain cooling of relations between the two religious leaders before the poison gas attack, since Tibetans in exile from Japan had sharply criticized Asahara’s public appearances. Yet he simply ignored such criticisms. This is shown by his spectacular letter to the *Kundun* of February 24, 1995, which was sent about a month before the events in Tokyo. The letter leaves no room for doubt about how deeply the Japanese sect leader felt himself to be connected to the Tibetan religious sphere. In it Asahara not without pride announces that his son, Gyokko, is the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama who died in 1989: “May I report to His Holiness most humbly that I am convinced that Gyokko is a reincarnation of Panchen Rinpoche” (Shimatsu, I, HPI 008).

As evidence for this suspicion Asahara appeals to synchronicities and miraculous signs. Like the Panchen Lama, his son was also deaf in one ear. Yet the vision which appeared to the child’s mother was even more unambiguous: “A boy flying in spurts over a snowy mountain range with his legs crossed in a full Lotus posture. A low male voice said: ‘Panchen Lama’. The voice continued, ‘Tibetan Buddhism is finished. I have come to rebuild it ...’” (Shimatsu, I).

Asahara also met with other high Tibetan tantra masters — Khamtrul Rinpoche, for example, an important Nyingmapa teacher, and Kalu Rinpoche, the *Kalachakra* specialist of the Kagyupas whose multifarious activities we have already considered. There is supposed to have been a meeting between the Tibetan scholar, Khamtrul (who the *Kundun* had prophesied to be the future *Rudra Chakrin*), the Dalai Lama, and a member of the AUM sect (Hisako Ishii) at which the publication of esoteric teachings of Padmasambhava in Japanese was discussed. According to statements by Asahara, Khamtrul Rinpoche confirmed his “perfect, absolute, divine wisdom” (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 18). On May 24, 1989, the Tibetan is supposed to have issued the Japanese guru with the following letter of recommendation:

“Teacher Asahara is my old friend, and I consider it an honor to be able to say the following in favor of him and of his religious activities:

1. I am filled with boundless admiration for Teacher Asahara’s innate Buddhist traits, like enthusiasm for his work, goodness, generosity, and selflessness.
2. He is an experienced and qualified meditation; tantra; and yoga instructor.

3. On the condition that he receives fitting recognition, Teacher Asahara can become a truly well-known teacher of Buddhism, who is capable of re-establishing the true doctrine of the Dharma in Japan.
4. I also know that AUM Shinrikyo, Teacher Asahara's religious organization, is a religious association that distinguishes itself through discipline and good organization and wide-ranging activities in order to suitably further social well-being.
5. Teacher Asahara's sympathy and assistance in regard to the people and culture of Tibet is an example of generosity and concern for the poor.
6. It is painful for me to see that AUM, with no regard for its good intentions and activities, has up until now not found the recognition and support it is due from the Japanese government.
7. I emphatically recommend that AUM be accorded the justly deserved status of a tax-free organization, and that it likewise receive all necessary governmental and social privileges. Many thanks, Khamtul Giamjang Dontup Rinpoche." (AUM Shinrikyo, HPI 013)

In Sri Lanka, the land of Theravada Buddhism, he was additionally praised as the "greatest religious person in Japan" and "the only one who can save the world" (also quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 18). The Prime Minister gave him a Shakyamuni relic, thus equipping him with an important symbol of authority. Then, in the foreword to one of his books it also says "The Buddha of our times is Shoko Asahara" (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 18). And the guru preaches to his followers "You ought to become Buddhas yourselves. You should preach my teachings, or rather the cosmic truth, and should produce many Buddhas. Spread the AUM system of training on a global scale and scatter Buddhas around the whole world. If we accomplish this, all battles and conflicts shall come to an end" (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 35).

In light of the in hindsight extremely embarrassing meetings of the *Kundun* and high Lamaist dignitaries with Shoko Asahara, His Holiness's representative in Japan (Karma Gelek Yuthok) issued a interesting communiqué some weeks after the attack. Before the world press Karma Gelek Yuthok explained that "Whatever little relationship Asahara had with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan lamas fell purely under the religious domain in spirit and deed. I had nothing to do with the world-shocking criminal acts known and alleged to have been committed by the AUM cult. It is unthinkable that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is related with the criminal acts of AUM simply because of his casual spiritual relationship with Asahara" (Samdup).

We see this in a completely different light, however. It was precisely because of these *spiritual* encounters with the god-king and his "viceroys" and his intensive study of the Tibetan/tantric esoterica and apocalyptica that the inexorable madness developed in Asahara's mind which made him become the *doomsday guru* of the western press.

### **The staged Shambhala war**

Let us begin, then, to present the “spiritual” evidence and incriminating material piece by piece: there is no doubt that Asahara believed himself to be the incarnation of a *Shambhala* warrior and was absolutely convinced that he was acting as a delegate of the mythic kingdom. “There will be a final battle between Rudra Chakrin, the king of *Shambhala*, and a foolish being called *Vemacitta*. The war at the end of this century is the last event seen by many prophets for the past several thousand years. When it happens, I want to fight bravely”, the guru had proclaimed via his radio station four (!) months before the Tokyo assassination (on December 4, 1994) (Archipelago, I, HPI 003). Rudra Chakrin (“the terrible wheel turner”), the militant doomsday king of Shambhala, is also an epithet of the Indian god, Shiva. The destroyer god and the Buddha blend into one figure for Asahara, just as they merge into one as the final Shambhala king, Rudra Chakrin, in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. As his followers were called upon “to have the purest faith in the guru, the Great Lord Shiva, or the Buddhas”, Asahara declared in December 1990 that “Here, the Buddhas and the Great Lord Shiva mean the guru [Asahara], who is their incarnation” (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 18). Or, even more succinctly: “The first thing you should do is to understand the Great Lord Shiva, the Buddhas, and the guru as one, as the embodiment of truth and to take refuge in them. Refuge means to learn their teachings, to make sacrifices, and perform services for them (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 30). As early as in spring 1985, whilst meditating on the beach at Miura, south of Tokyo, he was visited by a vision of Shiva “the god of light who leads the armies of the gods” who “charged him with building an ideal society made up of those who had attained psychic powers, a society called the Kingdom of Shambhala. ... Asahara’s seaside epiphany was the origin of his claim to be a messiah and his leadership role in Armageddon, or final war, which would destroy Japan” (Brackett, 1996, p. 66). A sect pamphlet suggests that Asahara himself came from Shambhala and had descended to earth in order to direct and save it: “This kingdom (Shambhala), ruled by the god Shiva, is a world where only those souls which have attained the complete truth of the universe can go. In Shambhala, the ascetic practices of messianic persons have made great advances in order to lead souls to *gedatsu* (emancipation) and save them. Master Asahara has been reborn from there into the human world so that he might take up his mission as a messiah. Therefore, the Master’s efforts to embody truth throughout the human world have been sanctioned by the great will of the god Shiva” (quoted by Brackett, 1996, 70).

In his own words, Asahara drew up a “Japan Shambhalization Plan”. This was said to be “the first step to Shambhalizing the world. ... If you take part,” he explained to his readers, “you will achieve great virtue and rise to a higher world” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 18). IN the pamphlet already quoted above, it says, “For that reason Aum Shinri Kyo’s plan to transform Japan into Shambhala was presented. This plan is without equal in its scope, as it wants to extend Aum’s sacred sphere throughout all of Japan, making Japan the base for the salvation of the whole world by fostering the development of multitudes of holy people. This plan cannot be realized without the help of our believers. Please come and join us!” (quoted by Brackett, 1996, p. 70). The two journalists, David E. Kaplan and Andrew Marshall, with somewhat too little fantasy and far too restrictively see this “*Shambhala* project” as a plan “to open AUM offices and training centers in every major Japanese city and establish a ‘Lotus Village’ or utopian community where AUM members would survive Armageddon” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 18). But whatever Asahara may have understood by this, *Shambhala* was for him the guiding star that led him into the abyss and that he deliberately followed. One of the songs the members of the sect had to listen to daily on headphones goes “*Shambhala, Shambhala!*”

### **The sect's system of rituals is Tantric Buddhist**

Asahara became familiar with the teachings of Tantric Buddhism at a very early stage. In the early 1980s he joined a religious group by the name of Agon Shun (founded by Seiyu Kiriyma), which among other things employed sexual magic rites to attain rapid enlightenment. Asahara, despite having been a keen pupil, left the group and turned to the preferred teachings of Mahayana Buddhism. HE saw himself as an orthodox Buddhist who wanted to anchor afresh the “Four Noble Truths”, the “Bodhisattva vow”, and the system of monks and nuns in decadent Japan. After his contacts with the Tibetan lamas, however, this pure Mahayana orientation became increasingly complemented by tantric practices and viewpoints. In the spring of 1990 he introduced what he called the *Tantra-Vajrayana System of Practice* as a discipline of AUM *Shinrikyo*. Some time later a journal by the title of *Vajrayana Sacca* appeared.



***Shoko Asahara in Front of a Tantric Deity***

From this point on the gateway to the legitimization of any crime lay open. In accordance with the tantric “law of inversion” the low was from now on inverted into the high. „Bad deeds”, the young tantra master wrote, „instantly change into good deeds. This is a tantric way of thinking” (Asahara, 1991, vol. 1, p. 65). At another point it says, “If the guru possesses a crystal clear spirit, if a being can see through everything, then for him there are no lies; lies no longer mean anything to him. [...] Good and evil also change according to their circumstances. Somebody who has lied so as

to motivate another to follow the practice of truth, for instance. The fact that he has lied will certainly bring him bad karma, but the fact that he led somebody to the truth brings him merit. Hence, what one chooses to stress depends upon what one is aiming for. In the practice of Mahayana, this kind of exercise is not used. From a tantric point of view it is seen as good, then you will be of use to others because of your self-sacrifice" (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 32). We also learn of Asahara's commitment to the "crimes" of Tantric Buddhism from the charges laid against him by the state prosecutor: "The teachings of esoteric Buddhism from Tibet were really quite horrible", he is supposed to have said, "If, for example, a guru ordered a pupil to kill a thief, the pupil did so, and treated the deed as a virtuous one. In my previous existence I myself killed somebody at the guru's command" (Quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 33).

True to the tantric doctrine, Asahara explained the sexual magic symbolism of his system as follows: "For normal Japanese sensibilities it is a very obscene image. A man and a woman in sexual embrace. But the facts of the matter are quite different [...] This consort can be Parvati [Shiva's wife] or Dakini, and if one practices guru yoga the union is the holy union to create our astral bodies. It is the union of yin and yang" (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 27). He regularly held public lectures about *Kundalini Yoga*, he even spoke about the "fire serpent" in the Moscow sport stadium — naturally without going into the sexual magic practices of his *Tantra-Vajrayana System*. As the highest guru, all the women of the organization were at his disposal both on the basis of divine benevolence and *de facto*, and he made frequent use of this right, but it did not prevent him from granting his wife (Tomoko Ishii) the highest spiritual rank in the sect aside from his own. Just as in Tibet's monasteries, the tantric union with a *karma mudra* was for him exclusively the privilege of the highest initiates. In contrast, the main body of AUM members had to submit to a strict commandment of sexual abstinence. Anyone who was caught masturbating had to spend several days in solitary confinement.

This, however, was only the case — and here too we can see how strictly Asahara adhered to *Vajrayana* laws — if it came to ejaculation; other than that he recommended the exact opposite to his male pupils: "Masturbate daily, but do not ejaculate! ... Continue this for ten days. Then start masturbating twice a day ... Find a picture of your favorite entertainment star, preferably nude. Use the photo to activate your imagination and start masturbating four times a day" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 159). The number of daily masturbations is increased further in the course of the initiatory path.

By the sixth week the time has come. A female partner is found and given a little alcohol to drink. Then the couple withdrew together and began first with "some petting" in which the adept stroked the nipples of his *mudra* and stimulated her clitoris. Afterwards he copulated with the girl according to a predetermined rhythm that was always derived from factors of the number nine: keeping still for 81 breaths, moving the phallus in and out nine times; keeping still for another 81 breath units, 27 times in and out, and so forth. It is not clear from the translation by Kaplan and Marshall whether here too the seed is retained. At any rate they had to "always let her come first" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 160).

The offering up of the wisdom consort to the guru necessary in the high tantras was likewise practiced by the AUM sect. A pupil who made his girlfriend available justified this offertory act as follows: "If she and the guru fuse together her mental level rises. ... By sacrificing himself, he pours his energy into a woman. It's better [for her] than fusing with me" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 161). Asahara also made use of this reason: "This is a Tantric initiation. Your energy will rise quickly and you'll achieve enlightenment faster", he is said to have told a reluctant female pupil whilst he tore the clothes from her body (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 158).

Asahara also worked with the tantric fluids of blood and sperm. He had his own blood drawn off and offered it, often for high prices, to the members of the sect as a cure-all. His hair was boiled and drunk as a kind of tea. Even his bathwater is supposed to have been sold as a holy substance. Such practices were also widespread in Tibet's monasteries, for example the excrement of the great lamas was considered to be a medicine and sold well when manufactured into pills with other substances.

The science department of AUM, it was said one day, had discovered that the "DNA of the master" possessed magic characteristics and would grant anyone who drank it supernatural powers (*siddhis*). This was about Asahara's sperm, a small flask of which went for the price of \$7000 according to Kaplan and Marshall. Here too there is an allusion to the sperm gnosis of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, where the master gives the pupil to taste during the "secret initiation".

Likewise the horror scenarios the members of the sect had to go through in order to practice fearlessness are also tantric. "Delinquents" who transgressed the rules of the order were locked up in small chambers and had to watch videos of one horror film after another. Via a loudspeaker they were inundated with constant death threats.

Already after his first trip to India Asahara believed himself to be in possession of "supernatural powers" (*siddhi*). He claimed he could make contact with the dead and read the thoughts of others. Like the "*maha siddhas*" he was said to be able to walk through walls. "In the future ... I will be able to fly freely through the sky" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 7), he prophesied. He Later he developed the "Divine Ear" and was, on his own account, in a position "to hear the voices of the gods and humans" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 199).

### **Asahara's gods**

The metaphysics and spiritual practices of the sect were primarily dominated by Tibetan Buddhist images and exercise. Basically, "AUM Supreme Truth", we learn from Kaplan and Marshall, "became a familiar New Age blend of Eastern religion and mysticism. Its beliefs and rituals were

drawn heavily from Tibetan Buddhism, its physical rigor from yoga” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 15). He himself referred to his rituals as “Tibetan Buddhism” (*Tibetan Review*, May 1995, p. 9).

Of course, this is rejected by Dharamsala with protestation, in that the blame for the Japanese’s practices is (as often happens) pinned on the Hindu competition: „The rituals he teaches his disciples include practice of yoga, levitation and other acts that are neither Tibetan nor Buddhism and are more akin to ritual of Indian *sadhus* (Hindu ascetics). The teacher as well as the disciples wear flowing white robes, something that no practitioner of Buddhism does” (*Tibetan Review*, May, 1995, p. 9). This too is not entirely correct — in certain scenes from the *Kalachakra* ritual white robes are worn, and all the priests of *Shambhala* are dressed in white.

Asahara regarded himself as an incarnation of Buddha Shakyamuni. Publicly he declared that he was “at the same level as Buddha” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 25). In Bihar in India he sat upon the sacred seat and announced to those present, “I am Buddha” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 67). “The Buddha in our times is Master Shoko Asahara”, was the praise of his pupils (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 67). Many of the members of the sect were given Buddhist names. His closest collaborator, the sect’s *éminence grise*, Kiyohide Hayakawa, was called “Tiropa” (i.e., Tilopa) after the great *Kalachakra* master. The guru recognized him as “a Bodhisattva in his past life” and declared that “without Master Tiropa’s efforts there would be no AUM Supreme Truth” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 75). It was Asahara’s proclaimed intention to Buddhize the planet. “Spread the training system of AUM on a global scale”, the guru preached, “and scatter Buddhas over the world” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 16).

We have discussed in detail the description of Tantric Buddhism as a solar cult. Asahara also made appearances like a sun priest and like the prophet of a coming empire of light: “After insubstantial religions with pseudo-light, there will be a religion which produces light as the sun does, and it will change the future” (Archipelago, I, NPI 003).

Although his system of rituals was decisively influenced by Tibetan mysticism, this was not universally true of the gods. Here, in accordance with the guru’s world concept, the deities of other religions were also invoked. Since these were, according to the laws of Tantrism, nothing more than the yogi’s projections the doctrine was able to easily overcome the cultural hurdles.

Behind Asahara’s decision to carry out his act of destruction lay the Indian god, *Shiva*, the lord of destruction. The latter appeared to him a number of times, the guru said, and confirmed his enlightenment in his own words. The members of the sect were from now on expressly required to replace their own wills with the will of *Shiva*. One epithet of this god who lays waste to the world so as to subsequently produce it anew in the violent cycle of death and rebirth, is *Rudra*. Translated from the Sanskrit it means the “terrible one”, the “wild one”, the “violent one”. As the *Rudra* of the apocalyptic fire (*Kalagni Rudra*) he destroys the universe and time itself (White,

1996, p. 232). “Once it has consumed the waters of the ocean,” it says in a tantric text, “it will become the *Kalagni Rudra*, the fire that consumes time” (White, 1996, p. 232). There can be no doubt that Asahara adopted *Rudra*’s will to destroy from Tantric Buddhism. This is probably also true of the name: *Rudra Chakrin*, the 24th *Shambhala* king who contests the final battle, undoubtedly combines the characteristics of Buddha and of the wrathful *Shiva* in his person. That is exactly what Asahara sought to do. Incidentally, the region around Dharamsala, the seat of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in Exile, is from a Hindu point of view dedicated to the god *Shiva*.

The Japanese guru does not stop at making loans from Christianity either. After his first reading of the Bible he already announced: “I hereby declare myself to be the Christ” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 67). Afterwards he wrote a book on this topic and in it drew attention to his similarities to Jesus of Nazareth: “Jesus changed water to wine, I changed ordinary water to the water that emits light” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 18). Here, Asahara is referring to a transformatory miracle he performed in the presence of his pupils. From his own lips we learn “I am the last messiah in this century” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 67).

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“The guru’s most insistent megalomaniac claim was to deity. In addition to declaring himself an avatar of Shiva, he professed to have achieved ‘the state of a Buddha who has attained mirror-like wisdom’ and to be the ‘divine emperor’ of Japan and the world; the declared Christ, who will ‘disclose the meaning of Jesus’ gospel’; the ‘last twentieth-century savior’; the ‘holiest holy man’, one ‘beyond the Bible’; and the being who will inaugurate the Age of Aquarius and preside over a ‘new era of supreme truth’. For disciples transfixed by guruism, he could indeed be all these things (Lifton, 2000, p. 167)

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The fantasy worlds of certain comics also had an influence upon him. It is a fact that Asahara and members of the sect took the virtual reality of the comic strips for real. The same is true of science fiction novels. Isaac Asimov’s famous *Foundation* epic was declared to be a kind of holy book. In it we can read the following sentences: “The Empire will vanish and all its good with it. Its accumulated knowledge will decay and the order it has imposed will vanish” (quoted by Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 29). Additionally Asahara was convinced that extraterrestrials constantly visit our planet. He was, however, not on a friendly footing with them, as he believed among other things that they fed themselves with human flesh. From the world of “esoteric fascism” he had his reverence for Adolf Hitler, who was said to be still alive and be landing with an escort of UFOs in the near future.

### **The Japanese Chakravartin**

Within his group the “Buddha of our times” had an absolute power monopoly. He was lord over life and death in the truest sense of the word, there were cases where members who resisted

his will were tormented to death. In accordance with the absolutification of the teacher drawn from the tantras, he demanded that his pupils replace their own will with his own.

But for Asahara power was not just spiritual in nature. He combined practical political concepts with it very early on. When as a younger man he applied albeit unsuccessfully for admission to Tokyo University, he wanted to become the prime minister of Japan. Later he saw himself at the head of a Japanese Buddhocracy. He prophesied that he would soon ascend the imperial throne and created a shadow cabinet from among his people. Yet the guru was not even to be content with this role as a *Tennos*. Asahara intended to establish a “millennial kingdom” (!) which was to span the entire planet. He called his political model the “Supreme State”. Kaplan and Marshall comment that this description “leaves no doubt about who would inherit the world. And on top of the great empire, ruling serenely over the cosmos, sat Shoko Asahara, now deemed the Holy Monk Emperor” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 157). The claim to the world throne of the *Chakravartin* was thus a political program: “I intend to become a spiritual dictator ... A dictator of the world”, the *doomsday* guru openly proclaimed (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 25).

The financial motivations which Kaplan and Marshall attribute to him were thus not his first priority. He considered them to be only means to an end. A Japanese expert on the sect has expressed this most clearly: “Asahara distinguished himself from the other cult leaders in that he did not spend large sums of money upon himself. ... His primary goal was to attain power” (Repp, 1996b, p. 195).

### **Murder, violence, and religion**

Only a few months before it came to an explosion of violence, Shoko Asahara attempted to gain power via legal means — he founded a party (the Truth Party) and stood for election. Even this short sequence in his religious political career demonstrates how deeply allied to Buddhism in general and Tibetan Buddhism in particular he felt himself to be. He formed a shadow cabinet from among the members of his sect and gave these the names of either pupils of the historical Buddha or of high Tibetan lamas. [1] The ostentatious election campaign ended in a disastrous defeat. It is said that not even all the members of the sect voted for him. Soon afterwards he turned to the tactics of terror.

Asahara’s aggression arose from its opposite. Everything began with his proclaimed self-sacrifice in the sense of Mahayana Buddhism. One of the mantras which the members of the sect had to repeat constantly went as follows: “I make a joy of my suffering; I make the suffering of others my own suffering” (Repp, 1996a, p. 45). Completely in the Buddhist tradition, the guru wanted “to rescue people from their suffering” and “to lead the world to enlightenment”. (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, pp. 14-15). Thus, in this early phase the rejection of violence was one of his highest ethical principles: “Nonviolence”, Asahara said, “means to love every living creature”, and at another point he declaimed that “killing insects means accumulating the bad karma of killing” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 50).

But in accordance with the tantric “law of inversion”, and thanks to the fact that the Buddha can also appear in his terrible form as *Heruka*, this nonviolence soon became transformed into its exact opposite — cold-blooded terrorism. We spare ourselves the details of the sect’s numerous crimes. These include cases of imprisonment, extortion, bodily harm, child abuse, torture and all kinds of murder. The police charged Asahara’s followers with a total of 27 murders.

The murder of certain individuals was legitimated by a ritual which Asahara called *phowa* and which he had also imported from Tibetan cultural circles. This was understood to involve the deliberate leading of a soul to a higher spiritual level so that it could be freed from the harmful karma which clung to it in this current life. From a Tibetan point of view *phowa* practices can also include the murder of an individual. Asahara committed his followers to murder through an oath in the form of a prayer known as the “Vajrayana Vow” that required complete subjugation to the guru and the practice of *phowa*. It was recommended that the following prayer be recited “a thousand, a million, a billion times” (Brackett, 1996, p. 96).

I take refuge in the Tantra Vajrayana!

(repeated four times)

What is the first law?

To be mindful of the Buddha.

And in Tantra Vajrayana,

the Buddha and the Guru are identical.

I take refuge in the Guru!

(repeated four times)

What is the Guru?

The Guru is a life form born to phowa all souls.

Any method that leads to salvation is acceptable.

My life will come to an end sometime.

It makes no difference if the end comes in twenty years,

thirty years, or eighty years,

It will come regardless.  
What's important is how I give my life.  
If I give it for salvation,  
eliminating all the evil karma I have accumulated,  
freeing myself from all karma, the Guru and Shiva  
and all winners of truth  
will without fail lead me to a higher realm.  
So I practice the Vajrayana without fear.  
The Armageddon taught in the Bible approaches,  
The final battle is upon us.  
I will be among the holy troops of this last great battle  
And phowa the evil ones.  
I will phowa one or two evil ones.  
Phowa is the highest virtue  
And phowa is the path to the highest level of being.

(Brackett, 1996, pp. 96-97)

In the end, the Tibetan *phowa* ritual became the guiding principle behind the acts of terrorism and also played a significant role in the prosecution's case against Asahara. There, the following incriminating quotations from the guru were also tabled: "If your guru commands you to take somebody's life it is an indication that this person's time is already up. With other words you are killing this person at precisely the right time and making possible the *phowa* of this person. [...] The end justifies the means. Take the example of a person who is burdened by so many sins that he is certain to go to hell. If an enlightened person decides that it would be best to put an end to his life and to really kill him, this act would generally be seen by society as a straightforward murder. But in the light of our teachings the killing comes to the same thing as making his *phowa* possible for this person. Every enlightened person would see at once that both the murderer and the murdered benefit from the deed" (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 33).

The guru justified all of his orders to kill by appealing to the Tibetan practice of *phowa*, even in the case of the one-year-old son of the lawyer, Sakomoto, who took the sect on legally: “The child ended up not being raised by Sakomoto, who tried to repeat bad deeds”. It would be “born again in a higher world” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 42). According to Kaplan and Marshall, the guru is also supposed to have said that “it is good to eliminate people who continue to do bad things and are certain to go to hell” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 50). This was primarily directed at the immediate opponents of the sect, like the parents of members, lawyers and journalists.

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“Within Aum, Asahara’s attack guruism was anchored in what was called the *mahamudra*. In Tibetan Buddhism, the term refers to a state in which a devotee achieves ‘the unity of emptiness and luminosity’ and, thereby, ‘the purification ... [of] the transitory contamination of confusion.’ The concept was sometimes conceived in this way in Aum, and a few of Asahara’s closest disciples were described as achieving *mahamudra*. But given Aum’s atmosphere, attaining *mahamudra* came largely to mean the overcoming of all resistances to an absolute and unquestioned dedication to the guru himself” (Lifton, 2000, p. 63).

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### The Japanese Armageddon

Asahara made himself familiar with the “theologies of destruction” early on. A year after his visit to the Dalai Lama (in 1988) he began with his study of the *Apocalypse of St. John*. The *Prophecies of Nostradamus* followed soon after. This French prophet became a leading light for the sect. On the basis of inspirations whispered to him by the terror gods, the guru now developed his own apocalyptic prognostications.

At first they concerned rescue plans. The planet was supposed to be in danger and AUM had been chosen to secure world peace. But then the prognoses became increasingly gloomy. The planetary countdown was said to be in the offing: „In my opinion” Asahara said, „the realm of desire by the law of this universe, has already entered the process of going back to its original form to where it all started. In short, we are heading for Armageddon” (Asahara, 1996, vol. 2, p. 103). He actually used the Hebrew word “Armageddon”. But even now there was still talk of compassion and assistance and Asahara believed that “If AUM tries hard , we can reduce the victims of Armageddon to a fourth of the world’s population. ... However, at present, my rescue plan is totally delayed. The rate of survivors is getting smaller and smaller” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 31). “And what will happen after Armageddon?”, he asked in one of his sermons, “After Armageddon the beings will be divided into two extreme types: the ones who will go to the Heaven of Light and Sound, and the ones who will go to Hell”(Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, pp. 48-49).

His apocalyptic visions are dated precisely: in one of his prophecies from 1987, the year of enlightenment, he says that “Japan will rearm herself in 1992. Between 1999 and 2003, a nuclear

war is sure to break out. I, Asahara, have mentioned the outbreak of nuclear war for the first time. We have only fifteen years before it" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 16).

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"Any imagined Armageddon is violent, but the violence tends to be distant and mythic, to be brought about by evil forces that leave God with no other choice but total cleansing of this world. With Aum's Armageddon the violence was close at hand and palpable. Aum was always an actor in its own Armageddon drama, whether as a target of world-destroying enemies or as a fighting force in a great battle soon to begin or already under way. As time went on, however, Aum increasingly saw itself as the initiator, the trigger of the final event" (Lifton, 2000, p. 59).

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Somewhat later, in his book *Day of Annihilation*, there was no longer so much time left. According to this text, Japan would sink into the ocean already in 1996. The end of the world would begin in 1998/99. A pupil saw in a vision how a branch of AUM would move to Jerusalem in 1998 and that members of the sect would be imprisoned there and then tortured. In a triumphant campaign the fellow believers would be freed. Asahara, this prophecy predicted, would die the death of a martyr during the liberation and set off a final world war.

In order to introduce his "Shambhazation of the world", it was only natural that Asahara would want to lead a great apocalyptic army, then that is integral to the script of the tantric myth. Hence, as he was meditating on the Japanese Pacific coast, one day a powerful voice told him, "I have chosen you to lead God's army" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 12). From this point in time on the sect's music also changed; in place of the old harmonic *New Age* music of the spheres, military marches now sounded over the loudspeakers. "The time has come ... We have to fight ... Defeat means death for the guru", Asahara's closest intimate wrote in his notebook (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 154). The connection between the destruction of the world and emptiness invoked by the *Kalachakra Tantra* also had a decisive influence on Shoko Asahara, and even found expression in the title of one of his writings, *From Destruction to Emptiness: A Sequel to the Day of Destruction*.

## Religion and chemical laboratories

The final war could not be fought without effective weapons. Asahara recruited a small group of highly qualified scientists, all university graduates in the natural sciences: chemists, biochemists, electronic engineers. They were commissioned to establish large laboratories for the manufacture of chemical and biological weapons. According to Kaplan and Marshall colonies of all sorts of deadly bacteria were cultivated there, anthrax, influenza, and even the notorious Ebola virus. The young people dreamed of gigantic laser cannons. "When the power of this laser is increased," Asahara says, "a perfectly white belt, or sword can be seen. This is the sword referred to in the Book of Revelations. This sword will destroy virtually all life" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 207). He was especially fascinated by a "microplasm" weapon with which all living things could be

vaporized in seconds. "The weapons used in World War III" he wrote in 1993, "will make the atomic and hydrogen bombs look like toys. At present, the centerpiece of the Russian arsenal is called the star-reflector cannon. The United States has the Strategic Defense Initiative and the extension of this is 'microplasma'" (Archipelago, I, HPI 003).

In particular, Asahara's ingenious scientist, Hideo Murai reveled at the idea of all kinds of apocalyptic weapons of destruction. He was a specialist in electromagnetic (EM) phenomena. For him too, and for his work, the tantric law of inversion would one day take effect. At first Murai began by constructing weapons to defend the cult against the military apparatus of the superpowers. For years his paranoid guru believed himself to be the target of electromagnetic and chemical attacks by the most varied worldly and religious secret services. It was only thanks to his elevated spirituality that he was still alive at all. As redeemer of the world he wanted to rescue humanity from an imminent war of destruction and hence he devoted his thoughts to what countermeasures could be developed. But then came the moment when defense turned into attack. Hideo Murai was commissioned by his guru to develop miraculous weapons that were no longer defensive, but would rather accelerate the end of the world.

The sect now focused on the physical theories and experiments of the famous Serbo-Croatian inventor, Nikola Tesla (1846-1943), who had undertaken extensive research into the enormous electromagnetic (EM) energy fields that are said to span the globe. Tesla believed that influence could be gained over these and that earthquakes could thus be triggered or the weather changed. He is supposed to have designed appropriate machines and conducted successful experiments. In the course of his investigations he reached the conclusion that it would be possible to split the world into two halves like an apple with an "EM experiment". This tempting apocalyptic conception motivated the young scientists at AUM to write to the Tesla Society in New York and to visit the Tesla Museum in Belgrade so as to be able to examine his notes.

In March 1994 Hideo Murai went to Australia with several assistants and carried out electromagnetic (EM) experiments on a sheep station bought by the sect. He is supposed to have built an *all round* machine, which could both evoke earthquakes and act as a shield against nuclear warheads. This apparatus proved to be the ideal weapon of mass destruction for the "final war" (Archipelago, I). There are speculations that the Japanese earthquake in Kobe (in 1995) had an artificial origin and was staged by the technicians of the AUM sect. This may well sound just too fantastic, but on this occasion one of Asahara's prophecies, which were otherwise very rarely fulfilled, came true. Nine days before the big earthquake which shook the Hanshin region, on January 8, 1995 the guru announced on a radio program that "Japan will be attacked by an earthquake in 1995. The most likely place is Kobe" (Archipelago, II, HPI 004). After the event AUM announced that the infrastructure of the province of Kobe with its skyscrapers and major bridges had been "the best place for simulating an earthquake-weapon attack against a big city such as Tokyo. Kobe was the appropriate guinea pig" (Archipelago, II, HPI 004).

But at the foot of the holy Mount Fuji conventional weapons were also being mass produced. Members of the sect there were producing Russian automatic rifles (the AK-47) in factories disguised as spiritual centers. Sources purchased a military helicopter in Russia that was then dismantled and shipped to Japan piece by piece.

But, as should be self-evident, the tantra master Asahara saw the explosive force of his own mind as the most dangerous weapon of all. “In *Tantrayana* vows,” we hear from the man himself, “there is one that prohibits attainers from destroying villages and towns. This means that the power to destroy a town or village is obtained through *Tantrayana* and *Vajrayana* practice” (Archipelago, I, HPI 003). In accordance with the tantric logic of inversion that we have described in detail, the guru believed he was thoroughly justified in breaking this vow.

Fundamentally, Asahara’s factories corresponded conceptually to the alchemical laboratories of the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe, although they were incomparably more technical. In both cases scientists did not just experiment with chemical substances, rather they combined their findings with religious concepts and symbols. Let us recall how the couple, Nicholas and Helena Ivanovna Roerich, described the temple structures of *Shambhala* as “laboratories” and glorified the monastic priests of the wonderland as “adepts of a sacred alchemy”.

Asahara also gave his chemical factory holy names and called it the “Clear Stream Temple” or “Supreme Science” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 87). Several altars were to be found in the three-story building in which the poison gases were created. Shortly after entering one reached a mezzanine and came face to face with a golden figure of the destroyer god *Rudra Shiva*. To the left of this stood a small devotional shrine which according to Asahara housed some of the bones of the historical Buddha. He had brought them back with him from Sri Lanka to Japan. The room in which a wide variety of tinctures for the production of poisonous gases were stored was referred to as the “Room of Genesis”. Things were more matter of fact on the ground floor, there were tanks, extruders, reactors, ducting systems, circulating pumps. The main hall was called *Satian 7*, which meant “Truth 7”. But it also had a nickname. The young scientists referred to it simply as “the magician”. In the last days before the fateful attack on the underground a gigantic statue of Buddha was erected there.

### The Song of Sarin

Since it is not difficult to manufacture and the ingredients were easy for AUM to obtain, research and production were concentrated upon a highly effective nerve gas by the name of Sarin. This poison had been developed by the German national socialists in the Second World War. Asahara’s relation to the deadly substance proved to be very multi-layered. It followed a fiendish three-stage cycle. At first there was constant talk of how the sect itself was the victim of poison gas attacks. “Wherever I go,” the Guru announced, “I have been sprayed from helicopters or planes. The hour of my death has been foretold. The gas phenomenon has already happened. Next time it might be an atomic bomb” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 125). As a consequence of

this paranoia it was decided to hit back with the same weapon. In the third phase the poison became independent and developed into a quasi-divine substance. It was given half-ironic names like “Magic, Witch, and Sally” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 121) and sung about in the following hymn:

It came from Nazi Germany, a dangerous little chemical weapon,

Sarin! Sarin!

If you inhale the mysterious vapor, you will fall with bloody vomit

from your mouth,

Sarin! Sarin! Sarin — the chemical weapon.

Song of Sarin, the brave.

In the peaceful night of Matsumoto City

People can be killed, even with our own hands,

Everywhere there are dead bodies,

There! Inhale Sarin, Sarin,

Prepare Sarin! Prepare Sarin! Immediately poisonous gas weapons

will fill the place.

Spray! Spray! Sarin, the brave Sarin

(Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, pp. 212-213)

The original plan was to spray the poison gas over the parliament and government buildings with a helicopter so as to paralyze the Japanese apparatus of state. The attack on the underground system was therefore regarded as only a preparatory exercise.

Interestingly, 60 years before the events in Tokyo the Russian whom we have already portrayed in detail, Nicholas Roerich, had linked the *Shambhala myth* to poison gases. He was convinced that the wonderland was protected from invaders by a gaseous substance that he called “sur”. Here is his story, told to him on his travels through Central Asia in search of *Shambhala* by a Buddhist monk: “A lama, leader of a caravan, covers his mouth and nose with a scarf. He is asked why, since it is not cold. He reports: ‘Caution is needed now. We are approaching the forbidden

zone of *Shambhala*. We shall soon notice 'sur', the poisonous gas that protects the border of *Shambhala*. Konchok, our Tibetan, rides up to us and says in a subdued voice: 'Not far from here, as the Dalai Lama was traveling to Mongolia, all the people and animals in the caravan began to tremble and the Dalai Lama explained that they should not be alarmed since they had entered the forbidden zone of *Shambhala* and the vibrations of the air were strange to them' (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 73). A plume of toxic gas is also supposed to have streamed out of one of the famous Indian crematoria, the meeting place of many *Maha Siddhas*. It was assimilated by the submarine fire of the doomsday mare (*Kalagni*) also mentioned in the *Kalachakra Tantra* (White, 1996, p. 234).

Since Auschwitz , the terror of gas is also associated with the fate of the Jews and it is not surprising that Asahara as an admirer of Hitler integrated an aggressive anti-Semitism into his system. In a special issue of the AUM journal, *Vajrayana Sacca*, entitled "Manual of Fear", war is declared on the Jewish people: "On behalf of the world's 5.5 billion people, *Vajrayana Sacca* hereby declares war on the 'world shadow government' that murders untold numbers of people and, while hiding behind sonorous phrases and high-sounding principles, plans to brainwash and control the rest. Japanese awake! The hidden enemy's plot has long since torn our lives to shreds" (Brackett, 1996, pp. 107-108).

### **The international contacts**

AUM Shinrikyo was not a purely Japanese phenomenon but rather an international one that spread explosively through several countries, principally Russia. The starving nation, hungry for any spiritual message after so many years of communist dictatorship, became a paradise on earth for the guru from the Far East. In 1992 he stood in front of St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow with 300 of his followers, smiling and giving the victory salute. The pose had its effect. Within just a few months AUM was experiencing an unbroken rise in popularity across all of Russia. At its peak the number of members exceeded 30,000. Asahara enjoyed a surprisingly broad public recognition. He held a sermon on "Helping The World to Happiness with the Truth" before a packed crowd at the University of Moscow. He was introduced to the nascent capitalist power elite as "Japan's representative Buddhist leader (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 70).

The guru even gained influence over leading Russian politicians. He maintained an especially warm relationship with the influential chairman of the Russian Security Council, Oleg Ivanovich Lobov, at this stage one of Boris Yeltsin's close friends. Lobov is said to have done not a little to assist the spread of the sect. Asahara also knew how to cultivate contacts with well-known scientists. Things were similarly successful on the propaganda front: in 1992, the government station Radio Moscow broadcast his program "The Absolute Truth of Holy Heaven" twice a day.

Of course, Asahara was not tightfisted when it came to donations, a gesture which at that time in Russia opened all doors. But that doesn't explain the large influx of enthusiasts who received nothing other than the pretty words of the "last messiah". One gains the impression that here an

heir of Agvan Dorjiev's *Shambhala* vision- where the hidden kingdom was to be sought in Russia — was at work.

AUM Shinrikyo was the first religious sect from a highly industrialized country which with deliberate terror tactics turned on humanist society as such. It came from a religious milieu which espoused like no other the principle of nonviolence — that of Buddhism. Until then, people had known only occult groups like the 900 followers of Jim Jones in Jonestown, or the Sun Temple in Switzerland and Canada or the Branch Davidians from Waco, who had exterminated themselves but not uninvolved bystanders. Because of this new quality of religious violence, the events in Tokyo caused much dismay all around the world.

One might have thought that this would provoke global research into and discussion of the causes of and background to the Asahara phenomenon. If so one would have been forced to recognize the major influence *Vajrayana* had had upon the system of the *doomsday guru*. One would also have discovered the close connection between the *Shambhala myth* and the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Although such links are overt, since Asahara refers to them explicitly in his writings, both the Western and the Eastern public have chosen to act blind and passively await the next catastrophe. In the press of the world the event has already been forgotten repressed. In Japan too, nobody wants to look behind the scenes, although Asahara's trial is currently in progress: "In general this contradiction between religion and violence is resolved here by simply saying that AUM is not a religion at all" writes Martin Repp, and continues, "One cannot make it so easy for oneself, then AUM Shinrikyo is in its own understanding and in its practice [a] religion and has an essentially Buddhist creed" (Repp, 1996b, p. 190).

### The two different brothers

In the light of our study one could rightly say that the AUM sect was a consistent and true to the letter pupil of the tantric teachings. The occult magic world view, *kundalini* yoga, sexual magic, the linkage of power and seed retention, the grasping for the *Siddhis*, the invocation of the gods, the hastening of the end of the universe, the glorification of destruction, the great fascination with fantastic machines of destruction, the military obsessions, the idea of redemption, hope for a paradise, the claim to world domination, the *Shambhala myth* — all of these *leitmotifs* that were so significant for Asahara are melodies from the repertoire of Tibetan Buddhism, in particular that of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. For Asahara, the tantric path to enlightenment began in the Himalayas and was supposed to also end there. In 1988 he wrote that "After the United States we will go to Europe. Finally we will establish a center in the Himalayas, the origin of Buddhism and yoga. At this point my mission will be at an end" (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 27).

The story of Asahara demonstrates clearly that *Vajrayana* and the *Shambhala myth* contain an extremely demonic potential that can be activated at any moment. For the Asian side, especially for the Mongolians (as we have seen), the aggressive warrior ethos nascent in the idea of *Shambhala* has never been questioned and still continues to exist today in the wishful thinking of

many. There is a definite danger — as we shall show in the next chapter — that it could develop into a pan-Asian vision of fascist-like character.

Things are different with Tibetan Buddhism in the West: there the lamas play only the pacifist card with much success. It is almost the highest trump with which His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama wins the hearts of the people. He is thus revered all over the planet as the “greatest prince of peace of our time”.

What is the *Kundun*’s position on Shoko Asahara now? The Dalai Lama needs the support of religious groups in Japan since the majority of Buddhist schools in the country are friendly to China and foster frequent changes with Chinese monasteries. It is said of the very influential Soka Gakkai sect that they are in constant contact with the Chinese leadership. The Agon Shun sect (to which Asahara originally belonged) which was formerly friendly to the Dalai Lama has also switched loyalties and is now oriented towards Beijing (Repp 1997, p. 95). Additionally, Asahara had transferred large sums of money to the Tibetans in exile — official sources put the total at US \$1.7 million. All of these are factors in the political calculations which might help explain the contact between the Dalai Lama and the Japanese guru. If, however, we regard the meeting (with Asahara) from a tantric point of view, we are forced to conclude that at one of their meetings the Dalai Lama, as the supreme master of the Time Tantra, initiated the *doomsday guru* directly into the secrets of his “political mysticism” (the *Shambhala myth*). The reports of people who have because of his magical aura experienced an audience with the *Kundun* as a kind of initiation are by now legion. Indeed, how could it be otherwise in the light of an “omnipotent” and “omniscient deity” in the figure of a “simple Tibetan monk”. Hence, in interpreting the encounter between the two gurus in tantric terms, we have to assume it was an occult relation between a “god” (the Dalai Lama) and a “demon” (Asahara).

Now, in what does the relationship between these two unequal brothers consist? From a symbolic point of view the two share the duties laid out in the tantric world view: the one plays the compassionate *Bodhisattva* (the Dalai Lama), the other the wrathful *Heruka* (Asahara); the one the “mild” *Avalokiteshvara* who “looks down from above” (the Dalai Lama), the other the god of death and prince of hell, *Yama* (Asahara). The anthropologist and psychoanalyst, Robert A. Paul, has been able to demonstrate with convincing arguments how profoundly this two-facedness of the “good” and the “evil” Buddha has shaped Tibetan culture. The two Buddha beings (the light and the dark) are considered to be the counterposed forms of appearance of the one and the same divine substance which has both a light and a shadowy side. We may recall that Palgyi Dorje wore a white/black coat when he carried out the ritual murder of King Langdarma.

On this basis then, is Asahara the outwardly projected shadow of the Dalai Lama? His two most important predecessors also had such “shadow brothers” in whom cruelty and criminality were concentrated. Under the Fifth Dalai Lama it was the Mongol, Gushri Khan. This counterpart transformed Tibet into a “sea of boiling blood”. The thirteenth hierarch was accompanied by the bloodthirsty Kalmyk “Vengeful Lama”, Dambijantsan. Is it really only a coincidence that the

Fourteenth Dalai Lama appeared on the world stage together with the Japanese *doomsday guru*, Shoko Asahara?

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**Footnotes:**

[1] The names of the other members of the shadow cabinet aside from Shoko Asahara were Maha Kheema, Maitreya, Maha Angulimala, Milarepa, Sakula, Kisa Gotami, Punna.mantaniputta Saitama 3<sup>rd</sup>, Machig Lapdrön, Manjushrimitra, Mahakasappa, Kankha-Revata, Marpa, Naropa, Uruvela-kasappa, Siha, Vangisha, Sukka, Jivaka, Ajita, Tissa, Dharmavajiri, Vajiratissa, Bhaddakapilani, Sanjaya (Bracket, 1996, p. 80).

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## 14. CHINA'S METAPHYSICAL RIVALRY WITH TIBET

The Central Asian power which for centuries engaged the Tibetan Buddhocracy in the deepest rivalry was the Chinese Empire. Even if the focus of current discussions about historical relations between the two countries is centered on questions of territory, we must upon closer inspection regard this as the projected object of the actual dispute. Indeed, hidden behind the state-political facade lies a much more significant, metaphysically motivated power struggle. The magic/exotic world of Lamaism and the outflow of the major and vital rivers from the mountainous countries to the west led to the growth of an idea in the "Middle Kingdom" that events in Tibet had a decisive influence on the fate of their own country. The fates of the "Land of Snows" and China were seen by both sides as being closely interlinked. At the beginning of the twentieth century, leading Tibetans told the Englishman, Charles Bell, that Tibet was the "root of China" (Bell, 1994, p.114). As absurd as it may sound, the Chinese power elite never completely shook off this belief and they thus treated their Tibetan politics especially seriously.

In addition the rulers of the two nations, the "Son of Heaven" (the Chinese Emperor) and the "Ocean Priest" (the Dalai Lama), were claimants to the world throne and made the pretentious claim to represent the center of the cosmos, from where they wanted to govern the universe. As we have demonstrated in the vision guiding and fate of the Empress Wu Zetian, the Buddhist idea of a *Chakravartin* influenced the Chinese Empire from a very early stage (700 C.E.). During the Tang dynasty the rulers of China were worshipped as incarnations of the Bodhisattva *Manjushri* and as "wheel-turning kings" (*Chakravartin*).

Besides, it was completely irrelevant whether the current Chinese Emperor was of a more Taoist, Confucian, or Buddhist inclination, as the idea of a cosmocrat was common to all three systems. Even the Tibetans apportioned him this role at times, such as the Thirteenth Dalai Lama for example, who referred to the Manchu rulers as *Chakravartins* (Klieger, 1991, p. 32).

We should also not forget that several of the Chinese potentates allowed themselves to be initiated into the tantras and naturally laid claim to the visions of power articulated there. In 1279 Chögyel Phagpa, the grand abbot of the Sakyapa, initiated the Mongolian conqueror of China and founder of the Yuan dynasty, Kublai Khan, into the *Hevajra Tantra*. In 1746 the Qian Long ruler received a Lamaist tantric initiation as *Chakravartin*. Further it was an established tradition to recognize the Emperor of China as an emanation of the Bodhisattva *Manjushri*. This demonstrates that two Bodhisattvas could also fall into earnest political discord.

Tibetan culture owes just as much to Chinese as it does to that of India. A likeness of the great military leader and king, Songtsen Gampo (617–650), who forged the highlands into a single state of a previously unseen size is worshipped throughout all of Tibet . It shows him in full armor and flanked by his two chief wives. According to legend, the Chinese woman, Wen Cheng, and the Nepalese, Bhrikuti, were embodiments of the white and the green *Tara*. Both are supposed to have brought Buddhism to the “Land of Snows”. [1]

History confirms that the imperial princess, Wen Cheng, was accompanied by cultural goods from China that revolutionized the whole of Tibetan community life. The cultivation of cereals and fruits, irrigation, metallurgy, calendrics, a school system, weights and measures, manners and clothing — with great open-mindedness the king allowed these and similar blandishments of civilization to be imported from the “Middle Kingdom”. Young men from the Tibetan nobility were sent to study in China and India. Songtsen Gampo also made cultural loans from the other neighboring states of the highlands.

These Chinese acts of peace and cultural creativity were, however, preceded on the Tibetan side by a most aggressive and imperialist policy of conquest. The king was said to have commanded an army of 200,000 men. The art of war practiced by this incarnation of the “compassionate” Bodhisattva, *Avalokiteshvara*, was considered extremely barbaric and the “red faces”, as the Tibetans were called, spread fear and horror through all of Central Asia. The size to which Songtsen Gampo was able to expand his empire corresponds roughly to that of the territory currently claimed by the Tibetans in exile as their area of control.

Since that time the intensive exchange between the two countries has never dried up. Nearly all the regents of the Manchu dynasty (1644–1912) right up to the Empress Dowager Ci Xi felt bound to Lamaism on the basis of their Mongolian origins, although they publicly espoused ideas that were mostly Confucian. Their belief led them to have magnificent Lamaist temples built in Beijing. There have been a total of 28 significant Lama shrines built in the imperial city since the 18th century. Beyond the Great Wall, in the Manchurian — Mongolian border region, the imperial families erected their summer palace. They had an imposing Buddhist monastery built in the immediate vicinity and called it the “Potala” just like the seat of the Dalai Lama. In her biography, the imperial princess, The Ling, reports that tantric rituals were still being held in the Forbidden City at the start of the twentieth century (quoted by Klieger, 1991, p. 55). [2]

If a Dalai Lama journeyed to China then this was always conducted with great pomp. There was constant and debilitating squabbling about etiquette, the symbolic yardstick for the rank of the rulers meeting one another. Who first greeted whom, who was to sit where, with what title was

one addressed — such questions were far more important than discussions about borders. They reflect the most subtle shadings of the relative positions within a complete cosmological scheme. As the “Great Fifth” entered Beijing in 1652, he was indeed received like a regnant prince, since the ruling Manchu Emperor, Shun Chi, was much drawn to the Buddhist doctrine. In farewelling the hierarch he showered him with valuable gifts and honored him as the “self-creating Buddha and head of the valuable doctrine and community, *Vajradhara* Dalai Lama” (Schulemann, 1958, p. 247), but in secret he played him off against the Panchen Lama.

The cosmological chess game went on for centuries without clarity ever being achieved, and hence for both countries the majority of state political questions remained unanswered. For example, Lhasa was obliged to send gifts to Beijing every year. This was naturally regarded by the Chinese as a kind of tribute which demonstrated the dependence of the Land of Snows. But since these gifts were reciprocated with counter-presents, the Tibetans saw the relationship as one between equal partners. The Chinese countered with the establishment of a kind of Chinese governorship in Tibet under two officials known as *Ambane*. From a Chinese point of view they represented the worldly administration of the country. So that they could be played off against one another and avoid corruption, the *Ambane* were always dispatched to Tibet in pairs.

The Chinese also tried to gain influence over the Lamaist politics of incarnation. Among the Tibetan and Mongolian aristocracy it was increasingly the case that children from their own ranks were recognized as high incarnations. The intention behind this was to make important clerical posts *de facto* hereditary for the Tibetan noble clans. In order to hamper such familial expansions of power, the Chinese Emperor imposed an oracular procedure. In the case of the Dalai Lama three boys were to always be sought as potential successors and then the final decision would be made under Chinese supervision by the drawing of lots. The names and birth dates of the children were to be written on slips of paper, wrapped in dough and laid in a golden urn which the Emperor Kien Lung himself donated and had sent to Lhasa in 1793.

### **Mao Zedong: The Red Sun**

But did the power play between the two countries over the world throne end with the establishment of Chinese Communism in Tibet? Is the Tibetan-Chinese conflict of the last 50 years solely a confrontation between spiritualism and materialism, or were there “forces and powers” at work behind Chinese politics which wanted to establish Beijing as the center of the world at Lhasa’ expense? “Questions of legitimation have plagued all Chinese dynasties”, writes the Tibetologist Elliot Sperling with regard to current Chinese territorial claims over Tibet, „Questions of legitimation have plagued all Chinese dynasties”, writes the Tibetologist Elliot Sperling with regard to current Chinese territorial claims over Tibet, „Traditionally such questions revolved around the basic issue of whether a given dynasty or ruler possessed 'The Mandate of Heaven'. Among the signs that accompanied possession of The Mandate was the ability to unify the country and overcome all rival claimants for the territory and the throne of China. It would be a mistake not to

view the present regime within this tradition" (*Tibetan Review*, August 1983, p. 18). But to put Sperling's interesting thesis to the test, we need to first of all consider a man who shaped the politics of the Communist Party of China like no other and was worshipped by his followers like a god: *Mao Zedong*.

According to Tibetan reports, the occupation of Tibet by the Chinese was presaged from the beginning of the fifties by numerous "supernatural" signs: whilst meditating in the Ganden monastery the Fourteenth Dalai Lama saw the statue of the terror deity *Yamantaka* move its head and look to the east with a fierce expression. Various natural disasters, including a powerful earthquake and droughts befell the land. Humans and animals gave birth to monsters. A comet appeared in the skies. Stones became loose in various temples and fell to the ground. On September 9, 1951 the Chinese People's Liberation Army marched into Lhasa.



***The Panchen Lama, Mao Zedong, the Dalai Lama***

Before he had to flee, the young Dalai Lama had a number of meetings with the "Great Chairman" and was very impressed by him. As he shook Mao Zedong by the hand for the first time, the *Kundun* in his own words felt he was "in the presence of a strong magnetic force" (Craig, 1997, p. 178). Mao too felt the need to make a metaphysical assessment of the god-king: "The Dalai Lama is a god, not a man", he said and then qualified this by adding, "In any case he is seen that way by the majority of the Tibetan population" (*Tibetan Review*, January 1995, p. 10). Mao chatted with the god-king about religion and politics a number of times and is supposed to have expressed varying and contradictory opinions during these conversations. On one occasion, religion was for

him “opium for the people” in the classic Marxist sense, on another he saw in the historical Buddha a precursor of the idea of communism and declared the goddess *Tara* to be a “good woman”.

The twenty-year-old hierarch from Tibet looked up to the fatherly revolutionary from China with admiration and even nurtured the wish to become a member of the Communist Party. He fell, as Mary Craig puts it, under the spell of the red Emperor (Craig, 1997, p. 178). “I have heard chairman Mao talk on different matters”, the *Kundun* enthused in 1955, “and I received instructions from him. I have come to the firm conclusion that the brilliant prospects for the Chinese people as a whole are also the prospects for us Tibetan people; the path of our entire country is our path and no other” (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 142)

Mao Zedong, who at that time was pursuing a gradualist politics, saw in the young *Kundun* a powerful instrument through which to familiarize the feudal and religious elites of the Land of Snows with his multi-ethnic communist state. In a 17-point program he had conceded the “national regional autonomy [of Tibet] under the leadership of the Central People's Government”, and assured that the “existing political system”, especially the “status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama”, would remain untouched (Goldstein, 1997, p. 47).

### ***The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution***

After the flight of the Dalai Lama, the 17-point program was worthless and the gradualist politics of Beijing at an end. But it was first under the “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” (in the mid-sixties) that China's attitude towards Tibet shifted fundamentally. Within a tantric conception of history the Chinese Cultural Revolution has to be understood as a period of chaos and anarchy. Mao Zedong himself had— like a skilled *Vajra* master — deliberately evoked a general disorder so as to establish a paradise on earth after the destruction of the old values: “A great chaos will lead to a new order”, he wrote at the beginning of the youth revolt (Zhisui, 1994, p. 491). All over the country, students, school pupils, and young workers took to the land to spread the ideas of Mao Zedong. The “Red Guard” of Lhasa also understood itself to be the agent of its “Great Chairman”, as it published the following statement in December 1966: “We a group of lawless revolutionary rebels will wield the iron sweepers and swing the mighty cudgels to sweep the old world into a mess and bash people into complete confusion. We fear no gales and storms, nor flying sands and moving rocks ... To rebel, to rebel, and to rebel through to the end in order to create a brightly red new world of this proletariat” (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 183).

Although it was the smashing of the Lamaist religion which lay at the heart of the red attacks in Tibet, one must not forget that it was not just monks but also long-serving Chinese Party cadres in Lhasa and the Tibetan provinces who fell victim to the brutal subversion. Even if it was triggered by Mao Zedong, the Cultural Revolution was essentially a youth revolt and gave expression to a

deep intergenerational conflict. National interests did not play a significant role in these events. Hence, many young Tibetans likewise participated in the rebellious demonstrations in Lhasa, something which for reasons that are easy to understand is hushed up these days by Dharamsala.

Whether Mao Zedong approved of the radicality with which the Red Guard set to work remains doubtful. To this day — as we have already reported — the *Kundun* believes that the Party Chairman was not fully informed about the vandalistic attacks in Tibet and that Jiang Qing, his spouse, was the evildoer. [3] Mao's attitude can probably be best described by saying that in as far as the chaos served to consolidate his position he would have approved of it, and in as far as it weakened his position he would not. For Mao it was solely a matter of the accumulation of personal power, whereby it must be kept in mind, however, that he saw himself as being totally within the tradition of the Chinese Emperor as an energetic concentration of the country and its inhabitants. What strengthened him also strengthened the nation and the people. To this extent he thought in micro/macrocosmic terms.

### *The “deification” of Mao Zedong*

The people's tribune was also not free of the temptations of his own “deification”: “The Mao cult”, writes his personal physician, Zhisui, “spread in schools, factories, and communes — the Party Chairman became a god” (Li Zhisui, 1994, p. 442). At heart, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution must be regarded as a religious movement, and the “Marxist” from Beijing reveled in his worship as a “higher being”.

Numerous reports of the “marvels of the thoughts of Mao Zedong”, the countless prayer-like letters from readers in the Chinese newspapers, and the little “red book” with the sacrosanct words of the great helmsman, known worldwide as the “bible of Mao”, and much more make a religion of Maoism. Objects which factory workers gave to the “Great Chairman” were put on display on altars and revered like holy relics. After “men of the people” shook his hand, they didn't wash theirs for weeks and coursed through the country seizing the hands of passers by under the impression that they could give them a little of Mao's energy. In some Tibetan temples pictures of the Dalai Lama were even replaced with icons of the Chinese Communist leader.

In this, Mao was more like a red pontiff than a people's rebel. His followers revered him as a god-man in the face of whom the individuality of every other mortal Chinese was extinguished. “The 'equality before god'”, Wolfgang Bauer writes in reference to the Great Chairman Mao Zedong, “really did illuminate, and allowed those who felt themselves moved by it to become ‘brothers’, or monks [!] of some kind clothed in robes that were not just the most lowly but thus also identical and that caused all individual characteristics to vanish” (Bauer, 1989, p. 569).

The Tibetans, themselves the subjects of a god-king, had no problems with such images; for them the “communist” Mao Zedong was the “Chinese Emperor”, at least from the Cultural Revolution on. Later, they even transferred the imperial metaphors to the “capitalist” reformer Deng Xiaoping: “Neither the term ‘emperor’ nor ‘paramount leader’ nor ‘patriarch’ appear in the Chinese constitution but nevertheless that is the position Deng held ... he possessed political power for life, just like the emperors of old” (*Tibetan Review*, March 1997, p. 23).

### **Mao Zedong's “Tantrism”**

The most astonishing factor, however, is that like the Dalai Lama Mao Zedong also performed “tantric” practices, albeit *à la chinoise*. As his personal physician, Li Zhisui reports, even at great age the Great Chairman maintained an insatiable sexual appetite. One concubine followed another. In this he imitated a privilege that on this scale was accorded only to the Chinese Emperors. Like these, he saw his affairs less as providing satisfaction of his lust and instead understood them to be sexual magic exercises. The Chinese “Tantric” [4] is primarily a specialist in the extension of the human lifespan. It is not uncommon for the old texts to recommend bringing younger girls together with older men as energetic “fresheners”. This method of rejuvenation is spread throughout all of Asia and was also known to the high lamas in Tibet. The *Kalachakra Tantra* recommends “the rejuvenation of a 70-year-old via a *mudra* [wisdom girl]” (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra II*, p. 115).

Mao also knew the secret of semen retention: “He became a follower of Taoist sexual practices,” his personal physician writes, “through which he sought to extend his life and which were able to serve him as a pretext for his pleasures. Thus he claimed, for instance, that he needed *yin shui* (the water of *yin*, i.e., vaginal secretions) to complement his own *yang* (his masculine substance, the source of his strength, power, and longevity) which was running low. Since it was so important for his health and strength to build up his *yang* he dared not squander it. For this reason he only rarely ejaculated during coitus and instead won strength and power from the secretions of his female partners. The more *yin shui* the Chairman absorbed, the more powerful his male substance became. Frequent sexual intercourse was necessary for this, and he best preferred to go to bed with several women at once. He also asked his female partners to introduce him to other women — ostensibly so as to strengthen his life force through shared orgies” (Li Zhisui, 1994, pp. 387-388). He gave new female recruits a handbook to read entitled *Secrets of an Ordinary Girl*, so that they could prepare themselves for a Taoist rendezvous with him. Like the pupils of a lama, young members of the “red court” were fascinated by the prospect of offering the Great Chairman their wives as concubines (Li Zhisui, 1994, pp. 388, 392).

The two chief symbols of his life can be regarded as emblems of his tantric androgyny: the feminine “water” and masculine “sun”. Wolfgang Bauer has drawn attention to the highly sacred

significance which water and swimming have in Mao's symbolic world. His demonstrations of swimming, in which he covered long stretches of the Yangtze, the "Yellow River", were supposed to "express the dawning of a new, bold undertaking, through which a better world would arise: it was", the author says, "a kind of cultic action" which he "... completed with an almost ritual necessity on the eve of the 'Cultural Revolution'" (Bauer, 1989, p. 566).

One of the most popular images of this period was of Mao as the "Great Helmsman" who unerringly steered the masses through the waves of the revolutionary ocean. With print runs in the billions (!), poems such as the following were distributed among the people:

Traveling upon the high seas we trust in the helmsman  
As the ten thousand creatures in growing trust the sun.  
If rain and dew moisten them, the sprouts become strong.  
So we trust, when we push on with the revolution,  
in the thoughts of Mao Zedong.  
  
Fish cannot live away from water,  
Melons do not grow outside their bed.  
The revolutionary masses cannot stay apart  
From the Communist Party.  
The thoughts of Mao Zedong are their never-setting sun.

(quoted by Bauer, 1989, p. 567)

In this song we encounter the second symbol of power in the Mao cult alongside water: the "red sun" or the "great eastern sun", a metaphor which — as we have already reported — later reemerges in connection with the Tibetan "*Shambhala* warrior", Chögyam Trungpa. „Long life to Chairman Mao, our supreme commander and the most reddest red sun in our hearts", sang the cultural revolutionaries (Avedon, 1985, p. 349). The "thoughts of Mao Zedong" were also "equated with a red sun that rose over a red age as it were, a veneration that found expression in countless likenesses of Mao's features surrounded by red rays" (Bauer, 1989, p. 568). In this heliolatry, the Sinologist Wolfgang Bauer sees a religious influence that originated not in China but in the

western Asian religions of light like Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism that entered the Middle Kingdom during the Tang period and had become connected with Buddhist ideas there (Bauer, 1989, p. 567). Indeed, the same origin is ascribed to the *Kalachakra Tantra* by several scholars.



*Mao Zedong as the never setting sun*

Mao Zedong's theory of "blankness" also seems tantric. As early as 1958 he wrote that the China's weight within the family of peoples rested on the fact that "first of all [it] is poor and secondly, blank. ... A blank sheet of paper has no stains, and thus the newest and most beautiful words can be written on it, the newest and most beautiful images painted on it" (quoted by Bauer, 1989, pp. 555-556). Bauer sees explicit traces of the Buddhist ideal of "emptiness" in this: "The 'blank person', whose presence in Mao's view is especially pronounced among the Chinese people, is not just the 'pure', but also at the same time also the 'new person' in whom ... all the old organs in the body have been exchanged for new ones, and all the old convictions for new ones. Here the actual meaning of the spiritual transformation of the Chinese person, deliberately imbuing all facets of the personality, bordering on the mystic, encouraged with all the means of mass psychology, and which the West with horror classifies as 'brainwashing', becomes apparent" (Bauer, 1989, p. 556).

As if they wanted to exorcise their own repellant tantra practices through their projection onto their main opponent, the Tibetans in exile appeal to Chinese sources to link the Cultural Revolution with cannibalistic ritual practices. Individuals who were killed during the ideological struggles became the objects of cannibalism. At night and with great secrecy members of the Red Guard were said to have torn out the hearts and livers of the murdered and consumed them raw. There were supposed to have been occasions where people were struck down so that their brains could be sucked out using a metal tube (*Tibetan Review*, March 1997, p. 22). The anti-Chinese propaganda may arouse doubts about how much truth there is in such accounts, yet should they really have taken place they too would bring the revolutionary events close to a tantric pattern.

### *A spiritual rivalry between the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Mao Zedong?*

The hidden religious basis of the Chinese Cultural Revolution prevents us from describing the comprehensive opposition between Mao Zedong and the Dalai Lama as an antinomy between materialism and spirituality — an interpretation which the Tibetan lamas, the Chinese Communists, and the West have all given it, albeit all with differing evaluations. Rather, both systems (the Chinese and the Tibetan) stood — as the ruler of the Potala and the regent of the Forbidden City had for centuries — in mythic contest for the control of the world, both reached for the symbol of the “great eastern sun”. Mao too had attempted to impose his political ideology upon the whole of humanity. He applied the “theory of the taking of cities via the land” and via the farmers which he wrote and put into practice in the “Long March” as a revolutionary concept for the entire planet, in that he declared the non-industrialized countries of Asia, Africa, and South America to be “villages” that would revolt against the rich industrial nations as the “cities”.

But there can only be one world ruler! In 1976, the year in which the “red pontiff” (Mao Zedong) died, according to the writings of the Tibetans in exile things threatened to take a turn for the worse for the Tibetans. The state oracle had pronounced the gloomiest predictions. Thereupon His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama withdrew into retreat, the longest that he had ever made in India: “An extremely strict practice”, he later commented personally, “which requires complete seclusion over several weeks, linked to a very special teaching of the Fifth Dalai Lama” (Levenson, 1992, p. 242). The result of this “practice” was, as Claude B. Levenson reports, the following: firstly there was “a major earthquake in China with thousands of victims. Then Mao made his final bow upon the mortal stage. This prompted an Indian who was close to the Tibetans to state, ‘That’s enough, stop your praying, otherwise the sky will fall on the heads of the Chinese’” (Levenson, 1992, p. 242). In fact, shortly before his death the “Great Chairman” was directly affected by this earthquake. As his personal physician (who was present) reports, the bed shook, the house swayed, and a nearby tin roof rattled fearsomely.

Whether or not this was a coincidence, if a secret ritual of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was conducted to “liberate” Mao Zedong, it can only have been a matter of the voodoo-like killing practices from the *Golden Manuscript* of the “Great Fifth”. Further, it is clear from the Fourteenth

Dalai Lama's autobiography that on the day of Mao's death he was busy with the Time Tantra. At that time [1976], the Kundun says. „I was in Ladakh, part of the remote Indian province of Jammu and Kashmir, where I was conducting a *Kalachakra* initiation. On the second the ceremony's three days, Mao died. And the third day, it rained all morning. But, in the afternoon, there appeared one of the most beautiful rainbows I have ever seen. I was certain that it must be a good omen" (Dalai Lama XIV, 1990, 222)

### **The post-Maoist era in Tibet**

The Chinese of the Deng era recognized the error of their politics during the Cultural Revolution and publicly criticized themselves because of events in Tibet. An attempt was made to correct the mistakes and various former restrictions were relaxed step by step. As early as 1977 the *Kundun* was offered the chance to return to Tibet. This was no subterfuge but rather an earnest attempt to appease. One could talk about everything, Deng Xiaoping said, with the exception of total independence for Tibet.

Thus, over the course of years, with occasional interruptions, informal contacts sprang up between the representatives of the Tibetans in exile and the Chinese Party cadres. But no agreement was reached.

The Communist Party of China guaranteed the freedom of religious practice, albeit with certain restrictions. For example, it was forbidden to practice "religious propaganda" outside of the monastery walls, or to recruit monks who were under 18 years old, so as to protect children from "religious indoctrination". But by and large the Buddhist faith could be practiced unhampered, and it has bloomed like never before in the last 35 years.

In the meantime hundreds of thousands of western tourists have visited the "roof of the world". Individuals and travel groups of exiled Tibetans have also been permitted to visit the Land of Snows privately or were even officially invited as "guests of state". Among them has been Gyalo Thondup, the Dalai Lama's brother and military advisor, who conspired against the Chinese Communists with the CIA for years and counted among the greatest enemies of Beijing. The Chinese were firmly convinced that the Kundun's official delegations would not arouse much interest among the populace. The opposite was the case. Many thousands poured into Lhasa to see the brother of the Dalai Lama.

But apparently this "liberal" climate could not and still cannot heal the deep wounds inflicted after the invasion and during the Chinese occupation.

Up until 1998, the opposition to Beijing in Tibet was stronger than ever before since the flight of the Dalai Lama, as the bloody rebellion of October 1987 [5] and the since then unbroken wave of demonstrations and protests indicates. For this reason a state of emergency was in force in Lhasa and the neighboring region until 1990. The Tibet researcher Ronald Schwartz has published an interesting study in which he convincingly proves that the Tibetan resistance activities conform to ritualized patterns. Religion and politics, protest and ritual are blended here as well. Alongside its communicative function, every demonstration thus possesses a symbolic one, and is for the participants at heart a magic act which through constant repetition is supposed to achieve the expulsion of the Chinese and the development of a national awareness among the populace.

The central protest ceremony in the country consists in the circling of the Jokhang Temple by monks and laity who carry the Tibetan flag. This action is known as *khorra* and is linked to a tradition of circumambulation. Since time immemorial the believers have circled shrines in a clockwise direction with a prayer drum in the hand and the *om mani padme hum* formula on their lips, on the one hand to ensure a better rebirth, on the other to worship the deities dwelling there. However, these days the *khorra* is linked — and this is historically recent — with protest activity against the Chinese: Leaflets are distributed, placards carried, the Dalai Lama is cheered. At the same time monks offer up sacrificial cakes and invoke above all the terrible protective goddess, *Palden Lhamo*. As if they wanted to neutralize the magic of the protest ritual, the Chinese have begun wandering around the Jokhang in the opposite direction, i.e., counterclockwise.

Those monks who were wounded and killed by the Chinese security forces whilst performing the ritual in the eighties are considered the supreme national martyrs. Their sacrificial deaths demanded widespread imitation and in contrast to the Buddhist prohibition against violence could be legitimated without difficulty. To sacrifice your life does not contradict Buddhism, young monks from the Drepung monastery told western tourists (Schwartz, 1994, p. 71).

Without completely justifying his claims, Schwartz links the circling of the Jokhang with the vision of the Buddhist world kingship. He refers to the fact that Tibet's first Buddhist ruler, Songtsen Gampo, built the national shrine and that his spirit is supposed to be conjured up by the constant circumambulation: „Tibetans in succeeding centuries assimilated Songtsen Gampo to the universal [!] Buddhist paradigm of the ideal king, the *Chakravartin* or wheel-turning king, who subdues demonic forces and establishes a polity committed to promoting *Dharma* or righteousness” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 33).

A link between the world ruler thus evoked and the “tantric female sacrifice” is provided by the myth that the living heart of *Srinmo*, the mother of Tibet, beats in a mysterious lake beneath the

Jokhang where it was once nailed fast with a dagger by the king, Songtsen Gampo. In the light of the orientation of contemporary Buddhism, which remains firmly anchored in the andocentric tradition, the ritual circling of the temple can hardly be intended to free the earth goddess. In contrast, it can be assumed that the monk's concern is to strengthen the bonds holding down the female deity, just as the earth spirits are nailed to the ground anew in every *Kalachakra* ritual.

After a pause of 25 years, the Tibetan New Year's celebration (Monlam), banned by the Chinese in 1960, are since 1986 once more held in front of the Jokhang. This religious occasion, which as we have shown above is symbolically linked with the killing of King Langdarma, has been seized upon by the monks as a chance to provoke the Chinese authorities. But here too, the political protest cannot be separated from the mythological intention. „Its final ceremony,” Schwartz writes of the current Mönlam festivals, „which centres on *Maitreya*, the Buddha of the next age, looks forward to the return of harmony to the world with the re-emergence of the pure doctrine in the mythological future. The demonic powers threatening society, and bringing strife and suffering, are identified with the moral degeneration of the present age. The recommitment of Tibet as a nation to the cause of Buddhism is thus a step toward the collective salvation of the world” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 88) The ritual circling of the Jokhang and the feast held before the “cathedral” thus do not just prepare for the liberation of Tibet from the Chinese yoke, but also the establishment of a worldwide Buddhocracy (the resurrection of the pure doctrine in a mythological future).

Considered neutrally, the current social situation in Tibet proves to be far more complex than the Tibetans in exile would wish. Unquestionably, the Chinese have introduced many and decisive improvements in comparison to the feudal state Buddhism of before 1959. But likewise there is no question that the Tibetan population have had to endure bans, suppression, seizures, and human rights violations in the last 35 years. But the majority of these injustices and restrictions also apply throughout the rest of China. The cultural and ethnic changes under the influence of the Chinese Han and the Islamic Hui pouring in to the country may well be specific. Yet here too, there are processes at work which can hardly be described (as the “Dalai Lama” constantly does) as “cultural genocide”, but rather as a result of the transformation from a feudal state *via* communism into a highly industrialized and multicultural country.

### **A pan-Asian vision of the Kalachakra Tantra?**

In this section we would like to discuss two possible political developments which have not as far as we know been considered before, because they appear absurd on the basis of the current international state of affairs. However, in speculating about future events in world history, one has to free oneself from the current position of the fronts. The twentieth century has produced unimaginable changes in the shortest of times, with the three most important political events being the collapse of colonialism, the rise and fall of fascism, and that of communism. How often have we had to experience that the bitterest of enemies today become tomorrow's best friends and

vice versa. It is therefore legitimate to consider the question of whether the current Dalai Lama or one of his future incarnations can with an appeal to the *Shambhala myth* set himself up as the head of a Central Asian major-power block with China as the leading nation. The other question we want to consider is this — could the Chinese themselves use the ideology of the *Kalachakra Tantra* to pursue an imperialist policy in the future?

The *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala myth* had and still have a quite exceptional popularity in Central Asia. There, they hardly fulfill a need for world peace, but rather —especially in Mongolia —act as a symbol for dreams of becoming a major power. Thus the *Shambhala* prophecy undoubtedly possesses the explosive force to power an aggressive Asia's imperialist ideology. This idea is widespread among the Kalmyks, the various Mongolian tribes, the Bhutanese, the Sikkimese, and the Ladhakis.

Even the Japanese made use of the *Shambhala myth* in the forties in order to establish a foothold in Mongolia. The power-hungry fascist elite of the island were generous in creating political-religious combinations. They had known how to fuse Buddhism and Shintoism together into an imposing imperialist ideology in their own country. Why should this not also happen with Lamaism? Hence Japanese agents strove to create contacts with the lamas of Central Asia and Tibet (Kimura, 1990). They even funded a search party for the incarnation of the Ninth Jebtsundampa Khutuktu, the “yellow pontiff of the Mongolians”, and sent it to Lhasa for this purpose (*Tibetan Review*, February 1991, p. 19). There were already close contacts to Japan under the Thirteenth Dalai Lama; he was advised in military questions, for example, was a Japanese by the name of Yasujiro Yajima (*Tibetan Review*, June 1982, pp. 8f.).

In line with the worldwide renaissance in all religions and their fundamentalist strains it can therefore not be excluded that Lamaism also regain a foothold in China and that after a return of the Dalai Lama the *Kalachakra* ideology become widespread there. It would then — as Edwin Bernbaum opines — just be seeds that had been sown before which would sprout. „Through the Mongolians, the Manchus, and the influence of the Panchen Lamas, the Kalachakra Tantra even had an impact on China: A major landmark of Peking, the *Pai t'a*, a white Tibetan-style stupa on a hill overlooking the Forbidden City, bears the emblem of the Kalachakra Teaching, *The Ten of Power*. Great Kalachakra Initiations were also given in Peking.” (Bernbaum, 1980, p. 286, f. 7) These were conducted in the thirties by the Panchen Lama.

### ***Taiwan: A springboard for Tibetan Buddhism and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama?***

Yet as a decisive indicator of the potential “conquest” of China by Tibetan Buddhism, its explosive spread in Taiwan must be mentioned. Tibetan lamas first began to missionize the island in 1949. But their work was soon extinguished and could only be resumed in 1980. From this point in time

on, however, the tantric doctrine has enjoyed a triumphal progress. The Deutsche Presse Agentur (dpa) estimates the number of the *Kundun*'s followers in Taiwan to be between 200 and 300 thousand and increasing, whilst the *Tibetan Review* of May 1997 even reports a figure of half a million. Over a hundred Tibetan Buddhist shrines have been built. Every month around 100 Lamaist monks from all countries visit Taiwan "to raise money for Tibetan temples around the world" there (*Tibetan Review*, May 1995, p. 11).

Increasingly, high lamas are also reincarnating themselves in Taiwanese, i.e., Chinese, families. To date, four of these have been "discovered" — an adult and three children — in the years 1987, 1990, 1991, and 1995. Lama Lobsang Jungney told a reporter that "Reincarnation can happen wherever there is the need for Buddhism. Taiwan is a blessed land. It could have 40 reincarnated lamas." (*Tibetan Review*, May 1995, pp. 10-11).

In March 1997 a spectacular reception was prepared for the Dalai Lama in many locations around the country. The political climate had shifted fundamentally. The earlier skepticism and reservation with which the god-king was treated by officials in Taipei, since as nationalists they did not approve of a detachment of the Land of Snows from China, had given way to a warm-hearted atmosphere. His Holiness was praised in the press as the "most significant visionary of peace" of our time. The encounter with President Lee Teng-hui, at which the two "heads of government" discussed spiritual topics among other things, was celebrated in the media as a "meeting of the philosophy kings" (*Tibetan Review*, May 1997, p. 15). The *Kundun* has rarely been so applauded. "In fact," the *Tibetan Review* writes, "the Taiwan visit was the most politically charged of all his overseas visits in recent memory" (*Tibetan Review*, May 1997, p. 12). In the southern harbor city of Kaohsiung the *Kundun* held a rousing speech in front of 50,000 followers in a sport stadium. The Tibetan national flag was flown at every location where he stopped. The Taiwanese government approved a large sum for the establishment of a Tibet office in Taipei. The office is referred to by the Tibetans in exile as a "*de facto* embassy".

At around the same time, despite strong protest from Beijing, Tibetan monks brought an old tooth of the Buddha, which fleeing lamas had taken with them during the Cultural Revolution, to Taiwan. The mainland Chinese demanded the tooth back. In contrast a press report said, "Taiwanese politicians expressed the hope [that] the relic would bring peace to Taiwan, after several corruption scandals and air disasters had cost over 200 people their lives" (*Schweizerisch Tibetische Freundschaft*, April 14, 1998 - Internet).

The spectacular development of Lamaist Buddhism in Nationalist China (Taiwan) shows that the land could be used as an ideal springboard to establish itself in a China freed of the Communist Party. Ultimately, the *Kundun* says, the Chinese had collected negative karma through the occupation of Tibet and would have to bear the consequences of this (*Tibetan Review*, May 1997,

p. 19). How could this karma be better worked off than through the Middle Kingdom as a whole joining the Lamaist faith.

### *The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Chinese*

The cultural relationships of the *Kundun* and of members of his family to the Chinese are more complex and multi-layered than they are perceived to be in the West. Let us recall that Chinese was spoken in the home of the god-king's parents in Takster. In connection with the regent, Reting Rinpoche, the father of the Dalai Lama showed such a great sympathy towards Beijing that still today the Chinese celebrate him as one of their "patriots" (Craig, 1997, p. 232). Two of His Holiness's brothers, Gyalo Thundup and Tenzin Choegyal, speak fluent Chinese. His impressive dealings with Beijing and his pragmatic politics have several times earned Gyalo Thundup the accusation by Tibetans in exile that he is a traitor who would sell Tibet to the Chinese (Craig, 1997, pp. 334ff.). Dharamsala has maintained personal contacts with many influential figures in Hong Kong and Taiwan since the sixties.

Since the nineties, the constant exchange with the Chinese has become increasingly central to the *Kundun's* politics. In a speech made in front of Chinese students in Boston (USA) on September 9, 1995, His Holiness begins with a statement of how important the contact to China and its people is for him. The usual constitutional statements and the well-known demands for peace, human rights, religious freedom, pluralism, etc. then follow, as if a western parliamentarian were campaigning for his country's democracy. Only at the end of his speech does the *Kundun* let the cat out of the bag and nonchalantly proposes Tibetan Buddhism as China's new religion and thus, indirectly, himself as the Buddhist messiah: "Finally it is my strong believe and hope that however small a nation Tibet might be, we can still contribute to the peace and the prosperity of China. Decades of communist rule and the commercial activities in recent years both driven by extreme materialism, be it communist or capitalist, are destroying much of China's spiritual and moral values. A huge spiritual and moral vacuum is thus being rapidly created in the Chinese society. In this situation, the Tibetan Buddhist culture and philosophy would be able to serve millions of Chinese brothers and sisters in their search for moral and spiritual values. After all, traditionally Buddhism is not an alien philosophy to the Chinese people" (*Tibetan Review*, October 1995, p. 18). Advertising for the *Kalachakra* initiation organized for the year 1999 in Bloomington, Indiana was also available in Chinese. Since August 2000 one of the web sites run by the Tibetans in exile has been appearing in Chinese.

In recent months (up until 1998), "pro-Chinese" statements by the *Kundun* have been issued more and more frequently. In 1997 he explained that the materialistic Chinese could only profit from an adoption of spiritual Lamaism. Everywhere, indicators of a re-Buddhization of China were already to be seen. For example, a high-ranking member of the Chinese military had recently had himself blessed by the Mongolian great lama, Kusho Bakula Rinpoche, when the latter was in Beijing briefly. Another Chinese officer had participated in a Lamaist event seated in the lotus position,

and a Tibetan woman had told him how Tibetan Buddhism was flourishing in various regions in China.

"So from these stories we can see", the Dalai Lama continued, "that when the situation in China proper becomes more open, with more freedom, then definitely many Chinese will find useful inspiration from Tibetan Buddhist traditions" (*Shambhala Sun*, Archive, November 1996). In 1998, in an interview that His Holiness gave the German edition of *Playboy*, he quite materialistically says: "If we remain a part of China we will also profit materially from the enormous upturn of the country" (*Playboy*, German edition, March 1998, p. 44). The army of monks who are supposed to carry out this ambitious project of a "Lamaization of China" are currently being trained in Taiwan.

In 1997, the *Kundun* wrote to the Chinese Party Secretary, Jiang Zemin, that he would like to undertake a "non-political pilgrimage" to Wutaishan in Shanxi province (not in Tibet). The most sacred shrine of the Bodhisattva *Manujri*, who from a Lamaist point of view is incarnated in the person of the Chinese Emperor, is to be found in Wutaishan. Thus for the lamas the holy site harbors the *la*, the ruling energy of the Chinese Empire. In preparing for such a trip, the *Kundun*, who is a consistent thinker in such matters, will certainly have considered how best to magically acquire the *la* of the highly geomantically significant site of Wutaishan.

The god-king wants to meet Jiang Zemin at this sacred location to discuss Tibetan autonomy. But, as we have indicated, his primary motive may well be an esoteric one. A "*Kalachakra* ritual for world peace" is planned there. Traditionally, the Wutai mountains are seen as Lamaism's gateway to China. In the magical world view of the Dalai Lama, the construction of a sand mandala in this location would be the first step in the spiritual conquest of the Chinese realm. Already in 1987, the well-known Tibetan lama, Khenpo Jikphun conducted a *Kalachakra* initiation in front of 6000 people. He is also supposed to have levitated there and floated through the air for a brief period (Goldstein, 1998, p. 85).

At the end of his critical book, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, the Tibetologist and Buddhist Donald S. Lopez addresses the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's vision of "conquering" China specifically through the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Here he discusses the fact that participants in the ritual are reborn as Shambhala warriors. "The Dalai Lama", Lopez says, "may have found a more efficient technique for populating Shambhala and recruiting troops for the army of the twenty-fifth king, an army that will defeat the enemies of Buddhism and bring the utopia of Shambhala, hidden for so long beyond the Himalayas, to the world. It is the Dalai Lama's prayer, he says, that he will some day give the *Kalachakra* initiation in Beijing" (Lopez, 1998, p. 207).

The “Strasbourg Declaration” (of June 15, 1988), in which the Dalai Lama renounces a claim on state autonomy for Tibet if he is permitted to return to his country, creates the best conditions for a possible Lamaization of the greater Chinese territory. It is interesting in this context that with the renouncement of *political* autonomy, the Kundun at the same time articulated a territorial expansion for the *cultural* autonomy of Tibet. The border provinces of Kam and Amdo, which for centuries have possessed a mixed Chinese-Tibetan population, are now supposed to come under the cultural political control of the *Kundun*. Moderate circles in Beijing approve of the Dalai Lama’s return, as does the newly founded Democratic Party of China under Xu Wenli.

Also, in recent years the numerous contacts between exile Tibetan politicians and Beijing have not just been hostile, rather the contacts sometimes awake the impression that here an Asian *power play* is at work behind closed doors, one that is no longer easy for the West to understand. For example, His Holiness and the Chinese successfully cooperated in the search for and appointment of the reincarnation of the Karmapa, the leader of the Red Hats, although here a Kagyupa faction did propose another candidate and enthrone him in the West.

Since Clinton’s visit to China (in 1998) events in the secret diplomacy between the Tibetans in exile and the Chinese are becoming increasingly public. On Chinese television Clinton said to Jiang Zemin, “I have met the Dalai Lama. I think he is an upright man and believe that he and President Jiang would really get on if they spoke to one another” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, July 17, 1998). Thereupon, His Holiness publicly admitted that several “private channels” to Peking already existed which produce “fruitful contacts” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, July 17, 1998). However, since 1999 the wind has turned again. The “anti Dalai Lama campaigns” of the Chinese are now ceaseless. Owing to Chinese interventions the Kundun has had to endure several political setbacks throughout the entire Far East. During his visit to Japan in the Spring of 2000 he was no longer officially received. Even the Mayor of Tokyo (Shintaro Ishihara), a friend of the religious dignitary, had to cancel his invitation. The great hope of being present at the inauguration of the new Taiwanese president, Chen Shui-Bian on May 20, 2000, was not to be, even though his participation was originally planned here too. Despite internal and international protest, South Korea refused the Dalai Lama an entry visa. The Xchinese even succeeded in excluding the Kundun from the Millennium Summit of World Religions held by the UN at the end of August 2000 in New York. The worldwide protests at this decision remained quite subdued.

### ***The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and communism***

The *Kundun*’s constant attestations that Buddhism and Communism have common interests should also be seen as a further currying of favor with the Chinese. One can thus read numerous statements like the following from His Holiness: „The Lord Buddha wanted improvement in the spiritual realm, and Marx in the material; what alliance could be more fruitful?” (Hicks and Chogyam, 1990, p. 143); “I believe firmly there is common ground between communism and Buddhism” (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 188); “Normally I describe myself as half Marxist, half monk”

(*Zeitmagazin* 1988, no. 44, p. 24; retranslation). He is even known to have made a plea for a communist economic policy: "As far as the economy is concerned, the Marxist theory could possibly complement Buddhism..." (Levenson, 1992, p. 334). It is thus no wonder that at the god-king's suggestion, the "Communist Party of Tibet" was founded. The Dalai Lama has become a left-wing revolutionary even by the standards of those western nostalgics who mourn the passing of communism.

Up until in the eighties the Dalai Lama's concern was to create via such comments a good relationship with the Soviet Union, which had since the sixties become embroiled in a dangerous conflict with China. As we have seen, even the envoy of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Agvan Dorjiev, was a master at changing political fronts as he switched from the Tsar to Lenin without a problem following the Bolshevik seizure of power. Yet it is interesting that His Holiness has to continued to make such pro-Marxist statements after the collapse of most communist systems. Perhaps this is for ethical reasons, or because China at least ideologically continues to cling to its communist past?

These days through such statements the *Kundun* wants to keep open the possibility of a return to Tibet under Chinese control. In 1997 in Taiwan he explained that he was neither anti-Chinese nor anti-communist (*Tibetan Review*, May 1997, p. 14). He even criticized China because it had stepped back from its Marxist theory of economics and the gulf between rich and poor is thus becoming ever wider (Martin Scheidegger, speaking at the *Gesellschaft Schweizerisch Tibetische Freundschaft* [Society for Swiss-Tibetan Friendship], August 18, 1997).

### **Are the Chinese interested in the Shambhala myth?**

Do the Chinese have an interest in the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala myth*? Let us repeat, since time immemorial China and Tibet have oriented themselves to a mythic conception of history which is not immediately comprehensible to Americans or Europeans. Almost nobody here wants to believe that this archaic way of thinking continued to exist, even increased, under "materialistic" communism. For a Westerner, China today still represents "the land of materialism" vis-à-vis Tibet as "the land of spirituality". There are, however, rare exceptions who avoid this cliché, such as Hugh Richardson for example, who establishes the following in his history of Tibet: "The Chinese have ... a profound regard for history. But history, for them was not simply a scientific study. It had the features of a cult, akin to ancestor worship, with the ritual object of presenting the past, favorably emended and touched up, as a model for current political action. It had to conform also to the mystical view of China as the Centre of the World, the Universal Empire in which every other country had a natural urge to become a part ... The Communists ... were the first Chinese to have the power to convert their atavistic theories into fact" (quoted by Craig, 1997, p. 146).

If it was capable of surviving communism, this mythically based understanding of history will hardly disappear with it. In contrast, religious revivals are now running in parallel to the flourishing establishment of capitalist economic systems and the increasing mechanization of the country. Admittedly the Han Chinese are as a people very much oriented to material things, and Confucianism which has regained respectability in the last few years counts as a philosophy of reason not a religion. But history has demonstrated that visionary and ecstatic cults from outside were able to enter China with ease. The Chinese power elite have imported their religious-political ideas from other cultures several times in the past centuries. Hence the Middle Kingdom is historically prepared for such ideological/spiritual invasions, then up to and including Marxist communism it has been seen, the Sinologist Wolfgang Bauer writes, "that, as far as religion is concerned, China never went on the offensive, never missionized, but rather the reverse, was always only the target of such missionizations from outside" (Bauer, 1989, p. 570). Nevertheless such religious imports could never really monopolize the country, rather they all just had the one task, namely to reinforce the idea of China as the center of the world. This was also true for Marxist Maoism.

Let us also not forget that the Middle Kingdom followed the teachings of the Buddha for centuries. The earliest evidence of Buddhism can be traced back to the first century of our era. In the Tang dynasty many of the Emperors were Buddhists. Tibetan Lamaism held a great fascination especially in the final epoch, that of the Manchus. Thus for a self-confident Chinese power elite a Chinese reactivation of the *Shambhala myth* could without further ado deliver a traditionally anchored pan-Asian ideology to replace a fading communism. As under the Manchus, there is no need for such a vision to square with the ideas of the entire people.

### ***The Panchen Lama***

Perhaps the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet is not even needed at all for the Time Tantra to be able to spread in China. Perhaps the Chinese are already setting up their own *Kalachakra* master, the Panchen Lama, who is traditionally considered friendly towards China. „Tibetans believe," Edwin Bernbaum writes, „that the Panchen Lamas have a special connection with Shambhala, that makes them unique authorities on the kingdom." (Bernbaum, 1980, p. 185). In addition there is the widespread prophecy that *Rudra Chakrin*, the doomsday general, will be an incarnation of the Panchen Lama.

As we have already reported, the common history of the Dalai Lama and the ruler from Tashi Lunpho (the Panchen Lama) exhibits numerous political and spiritual discordances, which among other things led to the two hierarchs becoming allied with different foreign powers in their running battle against one another. The Panchen Lamas have always proudly defended their independence from Lhasa. By and large they were more friendly with the Chinese than were the rulers in the Potala. In 1923 the inner-Tibetan conflict came to a head in the Ninth Panchen Lama's flight to China. In his own words he was „unable to live under these troubles and suffering" inflicted

on him by Lhasa (Mehra, 1976, p. 45). Both he and the Dalai Lama had obtained weapons and munitions in advance, and an armed clash between the two princes of the church had been in the air for years. This exhausted itself, however, in the unsuccessful pursuit of the fleeing hierarchy from Tashilunpho by a body of three hundred men under orders from Lhasa. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama was so enraged that he denied the Buddhahood of the fleeing incarnation of *Amitabha*, because this was selfish, proud, and ignorant. It had, together „with his sinful companions, who resembled mad elephants and followed wrong path,” made itself scarce (Mehra, 1976, p. 45).

In 1932 the Panchen Lama is supposed to have planned an invasion of Tibet with 10,000 Chinese soldiers to conquer the Land of Snows and set himself up as its ruler. Only after the death of the “Great Thirteenth” was a real reconciliation with Lhasa possible. In 1937 the weakened and disappointed prince of the church returned to Tibet but died within a year. His pro-China politics, however, still found expression in his will in which he prophesied that “Buddha *Amitabha*’s next incarnation will be found among the Chinese” (Hermanns, 1956, p. 323).

In the search for the new incarnation the Chinese nation put forward one candidate and the Tibetan government another. Both parties refused to recognize the other’s boy. However, under great political pressure the Chinese were finally able to prevail. The Tenth Panchen Lama was then brought up under their influence. After the Dalai Lama had fled in 1959, the Chinese appointed the hierarchy from Tashilunpho as Tibet’s nominal head of state. However, he only exercised this office in a very limited manner and sometimes he allowed to be carried away to make declarations of solidarity with the Dalai Lama. This earned him years of house arrest and a ban on public appearances. Even if the Tibetans in exile now promote such statements as patriotic confessions, by and large the Tenth Panchen Lama played either his own or Beijing’s part. In 1978 he broke the vow of celibacy imposed upon him by the Gelugpa order, marrying a Chinese woman and having a daughter with her.

Shortly before his death he actively participated in the capitalist economic policies of the Deng Xiaoping era and founded the *Kangchen* in Tibet in 1987. This was a powerful umbrella organization that controlled a number of companies and businesses, distributed international development funds for Tibet, and exported Tibetan products. The neocapitalist business elite collected in the *Kangchen* was for the most part recruited from old Tibetan noble families and were opposed to the politics of the Dalai Lama, whilst from the other side they enjoyed the supportive benevolence of Beijing.

As far as the Tibetan protest movement of recent years is concerned, the Tenth Panchen Lama tried to exert a conciliatory influence upon the revolting monks, but regretted that they would not listen to him. “We insist upon re-educating the majority of monks and nuns who become guilty of

minor crimes [i.e., resistance against the Chinese authorities]" he announced publicly and went on, "But we will show no pity to those who have stirred up unrest" (MacInnes, 1993, p. 282).

In 1989 the tenth incarnation of the *Amitabha* died. The Chinese made the funeral celebrations into a grandiose event of state [!] that was broadcast nationally on radio and television. They invited the Fourteenth Dalai Lama to the burial which took place in Beijing, but did not want him to visit Tibet afterwards. For this reason the *Kundun* declined. At the same time the Tibetans in exile announced that the Panchen Lama had been poisoned.

The political power play entered a spectacular new round in the search for the eleventh incarnation. At first it seemed as if the two parties (the Chinese and the Tibetans in exile) would cooperate. But then there were two candidates: one proposed by the *Kundun* and one by Beijing. The latter was enthroned in Tashi Lunpho. A thoroughly power-conscious group of pro-Chinese lamas carried out the ceremonies, whilst the claimant designated by the Dalai Lama was sent home to his parents amid protests from the world public. At first, Dharamsala spoke of a murder, and then a kidnapping of the boy.

All of this may be considered an expression of the running battle between the Tibetans and the Chinese, yet even for the Tibetans in exile it is a surprise how much worth the Chinese laid on the magic procedure of the rebirth myth and why they elevated it to become an affair of state, especially since the upbringing of the Dalai Lama's candidate would likewise have lain in their hands. They probably decided on this course out of primarily pragmatic political considerations, but the magic religious system possesses a dynamic of its own and can captivate those who use it unknowingly. A Lamaization of China with or without the Dalai Lama is certainly a historical possibility. In October 1995 for example, the young Karmapa was guest of honor at the national day celebrations in Beijing and had talks with important heads of the Chinese government. The national press reported in detail on the subsequent journey through China which was organized for the young hierarch by the state. He is said to have exclaimed, "Long live the People's Republic of China!" (*Tibetan Review*, November 1994, p. 9).

What a perspective would be opened for the politics of the *Kalachakra* deities if they were able to anchor themselves in China with a combination of the Panchen and Dalai Lamas so as to deliver the foundations for a pan-Asian ideology! At last, father and son could be reunited, for those are the titles of the ruler from Tashilunpho (the father) and the hierarch from the Potala (the son) and how they also refer to one another. Then one would have taken on the task of bringing the Time Tantra to the West, the other of reawakening it in its country of origin in Central Asia. *Amitabha* and *Avalokiteshvara*, always quarreling in the form of their mortal incarnations, the Panchen and the Dalai Lama, would now complement one another — but this time it would not be a matter of Tibet, but China, and then the world.

## *The Communist Party of China*

The Communist Party of China's official position on the social role of religion admittedly still shows a Marxist-Leninist influence. "Religious belief and religious sentiments, religious ceremonies and organizations that are compatible with the corresponding beliefs and emotions, are all products of the history of a society.

The beginnings of religious mentality reflect a low level of production... ", it says in a government statement of principle, and the text goes on to say that in pre-communist times religion was used as a means "to control and still the masses" (MacInnes, 1993, p. 43). Nevertheless, religious freedom has been guaranteed since the seventies, albeit with some restrictions. Across the whole country a spreading religious renaissance can be observed that, although still under state control, is in the process of building up hugely like an underground current, and will soon surface in full power.

All religious orientations are affected by this — Taoism, Chan Buddhism, Lamaism, Islam, and the various Christian churches. Officially, Confucianism is not considered a faith but rather a philosophy. Since the Deng era the attacks of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution upon religious representatives have been self-critically and publicly condemned. At the moment, more out of a bad conscience and touristic motives than from religious fervor, vast sums of money are being expended on the restoration of the shrines destroyed.

Everyone is awaiting the great leap forwards in a religious rebirth of the country at any moment. "China's tussle with the Dalai Lama seems like a sideshow compared to the Taiwan crisis" writes the former editor of the *Japan Times Weekly*, Yoichi Clark Shimatsu, "But Beijing is waging a political contest for the hearts and minds of Asia's Buddhists that could prove far more significant than its battle over the future democracy in Taiwan" (Shimatsu, HPI 009).

It may be the result of purely power political considerations that the Chinese Communists employ Buddhist constructions to take the wind out of the sails of the general religious renaissance in the country via a strategy of attack, by declaring Mao Zedong to be a Bodhisattva for example (*Tibetan Review*, January 1994, p. 3). But there really are — as we were able to be convinced by a television documentary — residents of the eastern provinces of the extended territory who have set up likenesses of the Great Chairman on their altars beside those of *Guanyin* and *Avalokiteshvara*, to whom they pray for help in their need. A mythification of Mao and his transformation into a Bodhisattva figure should become all the easier the more time passes and the concrete historical events are forgotten.

There are, however, several factions facing off in the dawning struggle for Buddha's control of China. For example, some of the influential Japanese Buddhist sects who trace their origins to parent monasteries in China see the Tibetan clergy as an arch-enemy. This too has its historical causes. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century and under the protection of the great Mongolian rulers (of the Yuan dynasty), the lamas had the temples of the Chinese Buddhist Lotus sect in southern China razed to the ground. In reaction the latter organized a guerilla army of farmers and were successful in shaking off foreign control, sending the Tibetans home, and establishing the Ming dynasty (1368). "This tradition of religious rebellion", Yoichi Clark Shimatsu writes, "did not disappear under communism. Rather, it continued under an ideological guise. Mao Zedong's utopian vision that drove both the Cultural Revolution and the suppression of intellectuals in Tiananmen Square bears a striking resemblance with the populist Buddhist policies of Emperor Zhu Yuanhang, founder of the Ming Dynasty and himself a Lotus Sect Buddhist priest" (Shimatsu, HPI 009).

Many Japanese Buddhists see a new "worldly" utopia in a combination of Maoist populism, the continuation of Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms, and the familiar values of (non-Tibetan) Buddhism. At a meeting of the Soka Gokkai sect it was pointed out that the first name of the Chinese Premier Li Peng was "Roc", the name of the mythic giant bird that protected the Buddha. Li Peng answered allegorically that in present-day China the Buddha "is the people and I consider myself the guardian of the people" (Shimatsu, HPI 009). Representatives of Soka Gokkai also interpreted the relationship between Shoko Asahara and the Dalai Lama as a jointly planned attack on the pro-Chinese politics of the sect.

Like the Tibetans in exile, the Chinese know that power lies in the hands of the elites. These will decide which direction future developments take. It is doubtful whether the issue of national sovereignty will play any role at all among the Tibetan clergy should they be permitted to advance into China with the toleration and support of the state. Since the murder of King Langdarma, Tibetan history teaches us, the interests of monastic priests and not those of the people are preeminent in political decisions. This was likewise true in reverse for the Chinese Emperor. The Chinese ruling elite will in the future also decide according to power-political criteria which religious path they will pursue: "Beijing clearly looks to a Buddhist revival to fill the spiritual void in the Asian heartland so long as it does not challenge the nominally secular authorities. Such a revival could provide the major impetus into the Pacific century. Like all utopias, it could also be fraught with disaster" (Shimatsu, HPI 009).

The West, which has not reflected upon the potential for violence in Tantric/Tibetan Buddhism or rather has not even recognized it, sees — blind as it is — a pacifist and salvational deed by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in the spread of Lamaism in China. The White House Tibet expert, Melvyn Goldstein, all but demands of the Kundun that he return to Tibet. In this he is probably voicing the unofficial opinion of the American government: "If he [the Dalai Lama] really wants to achieve

something,” says Goldstein, “he has to stop attacking China on the international stage, he has to return and publicly accept the sovereignty over his home country” (*Spiegel* 16/1998, p. 118).

Everything indicates that this will soon happen, and indeed at first under conditions dictated by the Chinese. In his critique of the film *Kundun*, the journalist Tobias Kniebe writes that, “As little real power as this man [the Dalai Lama] may have at the moment — as a symbol he is unassailable and inextinguishable. The history of nonviolent resistance is one of the greatest, there is, and in it *Kundun* [the film] is a kind of prelude. The actual film, which we are waiting for, may soon begin: if an apparently impregnable, billion-strong market is infiltrated by the power of a symbol [the Dalai Lama] whose evidence it is unable to resist for long. If this film is ever made, it will not be shown in the cinemas, but rather on CNN” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, March 17, 1998). Kniebe and many others thus await a Lamaization of the whole Chinese territory.

A wild speculation? David Germano, Professor of Tibetan Studies in Virginia, ascertained on his travels in Tibet that “The Chinese fascination with Tibetan Buddhism is particularly important, and I have personally witnessed extremes of personal devotion and financial support by Han Chinese to both monastic and lay Tibetan religious figures [i.e., lamas] within the People’s Republic of China” (Goldstein, 1998, p. 86).

Such a perspective is expressed most clearly in a posting to an Internet discussion forum from April 8, 1998: “‘Easy, HHDL [His Holiness the Dalai Lama]”, it says, “can turn the people of Taiwan and China [into] becoming conformists of Tibetan Buddhism. Soon or later, there will be the Confederate Republics of Greater Asia. Republic of Taiwan, People’s Republic of China, Republic of Tibet, Mongolia Democratic Republic, Eastern Turkestan Republic, Inner Mongolian Republic, Nippon, Korea ... all will be parts of the CROGA. Dalai Lama will be the head of the CROGA” (Brigitte, Newsgroup 10).

But whether the *Kundun* returns home to the roof of the world or not, his aggressive *Kalachakra* ideology is not a topic for analysis and criticism in the West, where religion and politics are cleanly and neatly separated from one another. The despotic idea of a world ruler, the coming Armageddon, the world war between Buddhism and Islam, the establishment of a monastic dictatorship, the hegemony of the Tibetan gods over the planets, the development of a pan-Asian, Lamaist major-power politics — all visions which are laid out in the *Kundun*’s system and magically consolidated through every *Kalachakra* initiation — are simply not perceived by politicians from Europe and America. They let the wool be pulled over their eyes by the god-king’s professions of democracy and peace. How and by what means His Holiness seeks to culturally conquer the West is what we want to examine in the next chapter.

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### Footnotes:

[1] This is probably an invented *historia sacra*, as contemporary documents found in the library of Tunhuang do not say a word about the teaching of the Buddha being the state religion of the time. In the sources, the latter first emerges 150 years later under Trisong Detsen. It is also clear that Songtsen Gampo did not just marry two women, but rather five, from various neighboring states in order to bind these to himself and his dynasty.

[2] This sympathy of the Manchus for the Lamaist teachings was the sole reason why the Buddhist and yet very militant Mongolians remained peaceful for so long and bowed to the Chinese dominance. Shortly before its declaration of independence (in 1911), nobles and high lamas from the country sent a petition to the Russian Tsar, in which among other things it said: "Earlier, we respectfully subjected ourselves to the Manchu Khan because they fostered the Buddhist religion and spread the blessings" (Onon, 1989, p. 10).

[3] It has been adequately proven that the human rights violations exercised out by the Chinese forces of occupation between 1953 and the present day were significant. Monks were beaten, tortured, taken away, and executed, Nuns and girls were violated. During the rebellions villages were bombed and mass executions were carried out. The many and varied methods of torture included skinning alive. The scenes were terrible and are documented in numerous places (see for example, Joseph Campbell, 1973, pp. 509ff.). It is thus not in any way our intention to gloss over or hush up the attacks by the Chinese soldiery. All forms of killing and torture, but especially when it is inflicted on the helpless, must be condemned as strongly as possible. However, the bad politics of the Chinese Communists does not nullify their criticism of repressive social behavior in feudalistic Tibet. But it has led to a situation in which the Tibetans in exile can now offer a distorted history that in no way corresponds to historical reality prior to 1950.

[4] Strictly speaking, we are dealing with Taoist practices here. Nevertheless there are numerous similarities between the two systems, especially with regard to the male practices.

[5] The demonstrators burnt down a police station and a number of automobiles and shops. Between 6 and 20 Tibetans were killed when the police fired into the crowd. Some of the policemen on duty were also Tibetan.

## 15. THE BUDDHOCRATIC CONQUEST OF THE WEST

In the view of the Tibetan lamas, the spread of Buddhism in the West is predicted by an ancient prophecy. The historical Buddha is said to have made the following prognosis: "Two thousand and five hundred years after my passing the Dharma will spread to the land of the red-faced people" (Mullin, 1991, p. 145). This they take to be a reference to the USA and the continent's native inhabitants, the North American Indians. There is an astonishingly similar prophecy by the founder of Tibetan culture, Padmasambhava: "When the iron bird flies and horses run on wheels ... the Dharma will come to the land of the Red Man" (Bernbaum, 1982, p. 33). Western cultural figures like the director Martin Scorsese cite a famous pronouncement of the Tibetan state oracle prior to the flight of the *Kundun* in the 1950s: "The jewel that grants wishes shines in the West" says the prophecy (*Focus*, 46/1997, p. 168) "The jewel that grants wishes" is an epithet for the Dalai Lama.

In the 1960s and 70s the spread of Tantric Buddhism in the West still proved difficult, especially with regard to its social acceptance. The Buddhist groups shared more or less the same fate as all the other "exotic" sects. No distinction was drawn in public between Hare Krishna, Bhagwan followers or Gelugpa monks. Yet thanks to the mobility, political skill, sophisticated manner and charismatic aura of the Dalai Lama, Lamaism's isolation has in the meantime become transformed into its opposite and in recent years it has become a triumphal parade. Whilst for the other Eastern sects the number of new members has been stagnating or even declining since the 90s, Tibetan Buddhism has been growing "like an ocean wave" the news magazine *Spiegel* reports, continuing, "In the wake of sects and esoterica, Germans have [found] a new haven from the crisis of senselessness: Buddhism. In the [German] Federal Republic 300,000 people are sympathetic towards the far Eastern religion which discriminates against women, requires celibacy of its monks and nuns, and whose western teachers preach banalities as truths." (*Spiegel*, 6/1994) Four years later the same magazine reports, this time in a leading article which over many pages reads like a hymn of praise for the *Kundun*, that half a million Germans now follow the Buddhist path already. The *Spiegel* says that, "Advertising copywriters and heads of business, university professors and housewives profess their faith in the far Eastern religion — a rapidly increasing tendency. ... Even in the new federal states, in Menz in Brandenburg for instance, prayer flags now flutter, freshly converted mumble mantras [and] work on gilded Buddha figures" (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 109). The number of Tibetan centers in the Federal Republic increased from 81 to 141 within just six years (1998).

The German press has — probably unknowingly — become an instrument of propaganda for Tibetan Buddhism. The following short (!) collection of quotations is offered as a demonstration: "Tibet is booming in the West. Buddhism is the religion *à la mode*." (*Spiegel*, 13.4.1998); "In Germany too, Buddhism is becoming more and more of a topic" (*Gala*, 21.3.1998); "The victory march of the Dalai Lama leaves even the Pope pale with envy. In Hollywood the leader of is currently worshipped like a god" (*Playboy* [German edition], March 1998); "Buddhism is booming and no-one is really sure why" (*Bild* 19.3.1998); "In Buddha's arms more and more power women

discover their souls behind the facade of success" (*Bunte*, 1.11.1997); "Buddhism is becoming a trend religion in Germany" (*Focus* 5/1994).

The USA and other western countries exhibit even higher growth rates than Germany. In the United States there are said to be 1.5 million Buddhists in the meantime. "An ancient religion grows ever stronger roots in a new world, with the help of the movies, pop culture and the politics of repressed Tibet" writes the news magazine *Time*. (*Time*, vol. 150 no. 15, October 13, 1997). Between New York and San Francisco Buddhist centers are springing up one after another, "religious refuges in which actors, but also managers and politicians flee for inner reflection. ... Nowhere outside of the Vatican do so many prominent pilgrims meet as in this 'little Lhasa' [i.e., Dharamsala]. Tibet is booming in the West. Buddhism is the religion *à la mode*. An audience with the god-king is considered the *non plus ultra*" reports the *Spiegel* (*Spiegel* 16/1998, pp. 109, 108). Tens of thousands of Americans and Europeans have performed some tantric practices, many hundreds have undertaken the traditional three-year *retreat*, and the number of ordained "Westerners" is constantly growing.

Tibetan Buddhism confronts Western civilization with an image of longing which invokes the buried and forgotten legacy of theocratic cultures (which in pre-modern times defined European politics as well). Here, after the many sober years of rationalism (since the French Revolution), half dead of thirst for divine revelation, the modern person comes across a bubbling spring. Lamas from "beyond the horizon", revered in occult circles up until the middle of this century as enigmatic Eastern masters of a *secret doctrine* and who rarely met an ordinary person, have now descended from the "Roof of the World" and entered the over-sophisticated cities of western materialism. With them they have brought their old teachings of wisdom, their mystical knowledge, their archaic rites and secret magical practices. We can meet them in flesh and blood in London, New York, Paris, Rome, Madrid, Berlin, even in Jerusalem — as if a far Eastern fairytale had become true.

We have described often enough the political goal of this much-admired religious movement. It involves the establishment of a global Buddhocracy, a Shambhalization of the world, steered and governed, where possible, from Potala, the highest "Seat of the Gods" From there the longed-for Buddhist world ruler, the *Chakravartin*, is supposed to govern the globe and its peoples. Of course, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama would never speak so directly about this vision. But his prophet in the USA, Robert Thurman, is less circumspect.

### **Robert A. Thurman: "the academic godfather of the Tibetan cause"**

Robert Alexander Farrar Thurman, the founder and current head of the *Tibet House* in New York, traveled to Dharamsala in the early 1960s. There he was introduced to the Dalai Lama as "a crazy American boy, very intelligent, and with a good heart" who wanted to become a Buddhist monk. The Tibetan hierarch acceded to the young American's wish, ordained him as the first Westerner to become a Tibetan monk, and personally supervised his studies and initiatory exercises. He considered Thurman's training to be so significant that he required a weekly personal meeting.

Thurman's first teacher was Khen Losang Dondrub, Abbot of the Namgyal monastery which was specifically commissioned to perform the so-called Kalachakra ritual. Later, the Kalmyk Geshe Wangal (1901–1983) was appointed as teacher of the “crazy” American (born 1941), who today maintains that he will be able to celebrate the Buddhization of the USA within his lifetime.

Having returned from India to the United States, Thurman began an academic career, studying at Harvard and translating several classic Buddhist texts from Tibetan. He then founded the “Tibet House” in New York, a missionary office for the spread of Lamaism in America disguised as a cultural institute.

Alongside the two actors Richard Gere and Steven Segal, Thurman is the crowd puller of Tibetan Buddhism in the USA. His famous daughter, the Hollywood actress Uma Thurman, who as a small child sat on the lap of the Tibetan “god-king”, has made no small contribution to her father's popularity and opened the door to Hollywood celebrities. The *Herald Tribune* called Thurman “the academic godfather of the Tibetan cause” (*Herald Tribune*, 20 March 1997, p. 6) and in 1997 *Time* magazine ranked him among the 25 most influential opinion makers of America. He is described there with a telling ironic undertone as the “Saint Paul or Billy Graham of Buddhism” (*Time*, 28 April 1997, p. 42) Thurman is in fact extremely eloquent and understands how to fascinate his audience with powerful polemics and rhetorical brilliance. For example, he calls the Tibetans “the baby seals of the human right movement”.

In the Shugden affair, Thurman naturally took the side of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and proceeded with the most stringent measures against the “sectarians”, publicly disparaging them as the “Taliban of Buddhism”. When three monks were stabbed to death in Dharamsala he saw this murder as a ritual act: “The three were stabbed repeatedly and cut up in a way that was like exorcism” (*Newsweek*, 5 May 1997, p. 43).

Thurman is the most highly exposed intellectual in the American Tibet scene. His profound knowledge of the occult foundations of Lamaism, his intensive study of Tibetan language and culture, his initiation as the first Lamaist monk from the western camp, his rhetorical brilliance and not least his close connection to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, which is more than just a personal friendship and rests upon a religious political alliance, all make this man a major figure in the Lamaist world. The American is — as we shall see — the exoteric protagonist of an esoteric drama, whose script is written in what is known as the *Kalachakra Tantra*. He promotes a “cool revolution of the world community” and understands by this “a cool restoration of Lamaist Buddhism on a global scale”.

We met Robert Thurman in person at a Tibet Conference in Bonn (“Myth Tibet” in 1996). He was without doubt the most prominent and theatrical speaker and far exceeded the aspirations laid out by the conference. The organizers wanted to launch an academically aseptic discussion of

Tibet and its history under the motto that our image of Tibet is a western projection. In truth, Tibet was and is a contradictory country like any other, and the Tibetans like other peoples have had a tumultuous history. The image of Tibet therefore needs to be purged of any occultism and one-sided glorification. Thus the most well-known figures of modern international Tibetology were gathered in Bonn. The proceedings were in fact surprisingly critical and an image of Tibet emerged which was able to peel away some illusions. There was no more talk of a faultless and spiritual Shangri-La up on the roof of the world.

Despite this apparently critical approach, the event must be described as a manipulation. First of all, the cliché that the West alone is responsible for the widespread image of Tibet found here was reinforced. We have shown at many points in our book that this blissful image is also a creation of the lamas and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama himself. Further, the fact that Lamaism possesses a world view in which western civilization is to be supplanted via a new Buddhist millennium and that it is systematically working towards this goal was completely elided from the debate in Bonn. It appears the globalizing claims of Tibetan Buddhism ought to be passed over silently. At this conference Tibet continued to be portrayed as the tiny country oppressed by the Chinese giant, and the academics, the majority of whom were practicing Buddhists, presented themselves as committed ethnologists advocating, albeit somewhat more critically than usual, the rescue of an endangered culture of a people under threat. By and large this was the orientation of the conference in Bonn. It was hoped to create an island of “sober” scholarliness and expertise in order to inject a note of realism into the by now via the media completely exaggerated image of Tibet — in the justifiable fear that this could not be maintained indefinitely.

This carefully considered objective of the assembled Tibetologists was demolished by Thurman. In a powerfully eloquent speech entitled “Getting beyond Orientalism in approaching Buddhism and Tibet: A central concept”, he sketched a vision of the Buddhization of our planet, and of the establishment of a worldwide “Buddhocracy”. Here he dared to go a number of steps further than in his at that stage not yet published book, *Inner Revolution*. The quintessence of his dedicated presentation was that the decadent, materialistic West would soon go under and a global monastic system along Tibetan lines would emerge in its stead. This could well be based on traditional Tibet, which today at the end of the materialistic age appears modern to many: “Three hundred years before, this is the time, what I called modern Tibet, which is the Buddhocratic, unmilitaristic, mass-monastic society ...” (Thurman at the conference in Bonn).

Such perspectives clearly much irritated the conference organizers and immensely disturbed their ostensible attempt to introduce a note of academic clarity. The megalomaniac claims of Tibetan neo-Buddhism plainly and openly forced their way into the limelight during Thurman’s speech. A spectacular row with the officials resulted and Thurman left Bonn early.

Irrespective of one’s opinion of Thurman, his speech in Bonn was just plain honest; it called a spade a spade and remains an eminently important record since it introduced the term “Buddhocracy” into the discussion as something desirable, indeed as the sole safety anchor amid

the fall of the Western world. Those who are familiar with the background to Lamaism will recognize that Thurman has translated into easily understood western terms the religious political global pretensions of the Tibetan system codified in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. The American “mouthpiece of the Dalai Lama” is the principal witness for the fact that a worldwide “Buddhocracy” is aspired to not just in the tantric rituals but also by the propagandists of Tibetan Buddhism. Thurman probably revised and tamed down his final manuscript for *Inner Revolution* in light of events in Bonn. There, the emotive terms *Buddhocracy* and *Buddhocratic* are no longer so central as they were in his speech in Bonn. Nonetheless a careful reading of his book reveals the Buddhocratic intentions are not hidden in any way. In order to more clearly give prominence to these intentions, however, we will review his book in connection with his speech in Bonn.

### **The stolen revolution**

Anybody who summarizes the elements of the political program running through Thurman’s book *Inner Revolution* from cover to cover will soon recognize that they largely concern the demands of the “revolutionary” grass roots movement of the 70s and 80s. Here there is talk of equality of the sexes, individual freedom, personal emancipation, critical thought, nonconformity, grass roots democracy, human rights, a social ethos, a minimum income guaranteed by the state, equality of access to education, health and social services for all, ecological awareness, tolerance, pacifism, and self-realization. In an era in which all these ideas no longer have the same attraction as they did 20 years ago, such nostalgic demands are like a balsam. The ideals of the recent past appear to have not been in vain! The utopias of the 1960s will be realized after all, indeed, according to Thurman, this time without any use of violence. The era of “cool revolution” has just begun and we learn that all these individual and social political goals have always been a part of Buddhist cultural tradition, especially Tibetan-style Lamaism.

With this move, Thurman incorporates the entire set of ideas of a protest generation which sought to change the world along human-political lines and harnesses it to a Tibetan/Buddhist world view. In this he is a brilliant student of his smiling master, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Tens of thousands of people in Europe and America (including Petra Kelly and the authors) became victims of this skillful manipulation and believed that Lamaism could provide the example of a human-politically committed religion. Thousands stood up for Tibet, small and oppressed, because they revered in this country a treasure trove of spiritual and ethical values which would be destroyed by Chinese totalitarianism. Tibetan Buddhism as the final refuge of the social revolutionary ideals of the 70s, as the inheritance of the politically involved youth movement? This is — as we shall show — how Lamaism presents itself in Thurman’s book, and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama gives this interpretation his approval. “Thurman explained to me how some Western thinkers have assumed that Buddhism has no intention to change society ... Thurman’s book provides a timely correction to any lingering notions about Buddhism as an uncaring religion.” (Thurman1998, p. xiii)

But anyone who peeps behind the curtains must unfortunately ascertain that with his catalog of political demands Thurman holds a mirror up to the ideals of the “revolutionary” generation of the West, and that he fails to inform them about the reality of the Lamaist system in which used to and still does function along completely contrary social political lines.

## Thurman's forged history

In order to prevent this abuse of power becoming obvious, the construction of a forged history is necessary, as Thurman conscientiously and consistently demonstrates in his book. He presents the Tibet of old as a type of gentle "scholarly republic" of introspective monks, free of the turbulence of European/imperialist politics of business and war. In their seclusion these holy men performed over centuries a world mission, which is only now becoming noticeable. Since the Renaissance, Thurman explains, the West has effected the "outer modernity", that is the "outer enlightenment" through the scientific revolution. At the same time (above all since the rule of the Fifth Dalai Lama in the seventeenth century) an "inner revolution" has taken place in the Himalayas, which the American boldly describes as "inner modernity": "So we must qualify what we have come to call 'modernity' in the West as 'materialistic' or 'outer' modernity, and contrast it with a parallel but alternative Tibetan modernity qualified as 'spiritualistic' or 'inner' modernity" (Thurman 1998, p. 247). At the 1996 conference in Bonn he did in fact refer to the "inner modernization of the Tibetan society".

Committed Buddhism, according to Thurman, is instigating a "cool revolution" (in the sense of 'calm'). It is "cool" in contrast to the "hot" revolutions of the Western dominated history of the world which demanded so many casualties. The five fundamental principles of this "cool revolution" are cleverly assigned anew to a Western (and not Oriental) system of values: transcendental individualism, nonviolent pacifism, educational evolutionism, ecosocial altruism, universal democratism.

For Thurman, the Tibetan culture of "sacralization", "magic", "enlightenment", "spiritual progress", and "peaceful monasticism" stands in opposition to a Western civilization of "secularization", "disenchantment", "rationalization", "profane belief in material progress", and "materialism, industrialism, and militarism" (Thurman 1998, p. 246). Even though the "inner revolution" is unambiguously valued more highly, the achievements of the West ought not be totally abandoned in the future. Thurman sees the world culture of the dawning millennium in a hierarchical (East over West) union of both. Upon closer inspection, however, this "cool revolution" reveals itself to be a "cool restoration" in which the world is to be transformed into a Tibetan-style Buddhist monastic state.

To substantiate Lamaism's global mission (the "cool revolution") in his book, Thurman had to distort Tibetan history, or the history of Buddhism in general. He needed to construct a pure, faultless and ideal history which from the outset pursued an exemplary, highly ethical task of instruction, aimed to culminate eschatologically in the Buddhization of the entire planet. The Tibetan monasteries had to be portrayed as bulwarks of peace and spiritual development, altruistically at work in the social interests of all. The image of Tibet of old needed to appear appropriately noble-minded, "with", Thurman says, "the cultivation of scholarship and artistry; with the administration of the political system by enlightened hierarchs; with ascetic charisma diffused among the common people; and with the development of the reincarnation institution. It was a

process of the removal of deep roots in instinct and cultural patterns” (Thurman 1998, p. 231). A general misrepresentation in Thurman’s historical construction is the depiction of Buddhist society and especially Lamaism as fundamentally peaceful (to be played out in contrast to the deeply militaristic West): “[T]he main direction of the society was ecstatic and positive; intrigues, violence and persecution were rarer than in any other civilization” (Thurman 1998, p.36). Although appeals may be made to relevant sutras in support of such a pacifist image of Tibetan Buddhism, as a social reality it is completely fictive.

As we have demonstrated, the opposite is the case. Lamaism was caught up in bloody struggles between the various monastic factions from the outset. There was a terrible “civil war” in which the country’s two main orders faced one another as opponents. Political murder has always been par for the course and even the Dalai Lamas have not been spared. Even in the brief history of the exiled Tibetans it is a constant occurrence. The concept of the enemy was deeply anchored in ancient Tibetan culture, and persists to this day. Thus the destruction of “enemies of the teaching” is one of the standard requirements of all tantric ritual texts. The sexual magic practices which lie at the center of this religion and which Thurman either conceals or interprets as an expression of cooperation and sexual equality are based upon a fundamental misogyny. The social misery of the masses in old Tibet was shocking and repulsive, the authority of the priestly state was absolute and extended over life and death. To present Tibet’s traditional society as a political example for modernity, in which the people had oriented themselves toward a “broad social ethic” and in which anybody could achieve “freedom and happiness” (Thurman 1998, p. 138) is farcical.

Thus one shudders at the thought when Thurman opens up the following perspective for the world to come: “In the sacred history of the transformation of the wild frontier [pre-Buddhist] land of Tibet [into a Buddhocracy], we find a blueprint for completing the taming of our own wild world” (Thurman 1998, p. 220)

Thurman introduces the Buddhist emperor Ashoka (regnant from 272 to 236 B.C.E.), who “saw the practical superiority of moral and enlightened policy” (Thurman 1998, p. 115), as a political example for the times ahead. He portrays this Indian emperor as a “prince of peace” who — although originally a terrible hero of the battlefield — following a deep inner conversion abjured all war, transformed hate and pugnacity into compassion and nonviolence, and conducted a “spiritual revolution” to the benefit of all suffering beings. In the chapter entitled “A kingly revolution” (Thurman 1988, pp.109ff.), the author suggests that the Ashoka kingdom’s form of government, oriented along monastic lines, could today once again function as a model for the establishment of a worldwide Buddhist state. Thurman says that “[t]he politics of enlightenment since Ashoka proposes a truth-conquest of the planet—a Dharma-conquest, meaning a cultural, educational, and intellectual conquest” (Thurman 1998, p. 282).

Thurman wisely remains silent about the fact that this Maurya dynasty ruler was responsible for numerous un-Buddhist acts. For instance, under his reign the death penalty for criminals was not

abolished, among whom his own wife, Tisyaraksita, must have been counted, as he had her executed. In a Buddhist (!) description of his life, a Sanskrit work titled *Ashokavandana*, it states that he at one stage had 18,000 non-Buddhists, presumably Jainas, put to death, as one of them had insulted the “true teaching”, albeit in a relatively mild manner. In another instance he is alleged to have driven a Jaina and his entire family into their house which he then ordered to be burnt to the ground.

Nonetheless, Emperor Ashoka is a “cool revolutionary” for Thurman. His politics proclaimed “a social style of tolerance and admiration of nonviolence. They made the community a secure establishment that became unquestioned in its ubiquitous presence as school for gentleness, concentration, and liberation of critical reason; asylum for nonconformity; egalitarian democratic community, where decisions were made by consensual vote” (Thurman 1998, p. 117). To depict the absolutist emperor Ashoka as a guarantor and exemplar of an “egalitarian democratic community”, is a brilliant feat of arbitrary historical interpretation!

With equal emphasis Thurman presents the Indian/Buddhist *Maha Siddhas* (‘Grand Sorcerers’) as exemplary heroes of the ethos for whom there was no greater wish than to make others happy. However, as we have described in detail, these “ascetics who tamed the world” employed extremely dubious methods to this end, namely, they cultivated pure transgression in order to prove the vanity of all being. Their tantric, i.e., sexual magic, practices, in which they deliberately did evil (murder, rape, necrophagy) with the ostensible intention of creating something good, should, according to Thurman, be counted among the most significant acts of human civilization. Anyone who casts a glance over the “hagiographies” of these *Maha Siddhas* will be amazed at the barbaric consciousness possessed by these “heroes” of the tantric path. Only very rarely can socially ethical behavior be ascertained among these figures, who deliberately adopted asociality as a lifestyle.

But for Thurman these *Maha Siddhas* and their later Tibetan imitations are “radiant bodies of energy” upon whom the fate of humanity depends. “It is said that the hillsides and retreats of central Tibet were ablaze with the light generated by profound concentration, penetrating insights, and magnificent deeds of enthusiastic practitioners. The entire populace was moved by the energy released by individuals breaking through their age-old ignorance and prejudices and realizing enlightenment.” (Thurman 1998, pp. 227-228) When one compares the horrors of Tibetan history with the horrors in the tantric texts followed by the “enthusiastic practitioners”, then Thurman may indeed be correct. It is just that it was primarily dark energies which affected the Tibetan population and kept them in ignorance and servitude. Serfdom and slavery are attributes of old Tibetan society, just like an inhumane penal code and a pervasive oppression of women.

Padmasambhava, the supreme ambivalent founding figure of Tibetan Buddhism, is also celebrated by Thurman as an committed scholar of enlightenment. (Thurman 1998, 210). Nothing could be less typical of this sorcerer, who covered the Land of Snows with his excommunications and introduced the wrathful gods of pre-Buddhist Tibet in a horror army of aggressive protective

spirits, not so that their terrible character could be transformed, but rather so that they could now protect with sword and fright the “true teaching of Buddha” from its enemies. Great scholars of the Gelugpa order have time and again pointed out the ambivalence of this iridescent “cultural founder” (Padmasambhava), among whose deeds are two brutal infanticides, and expressly distanced themselves from his barbaric lifestyle.

When the Indian scholar Atisha began his work in Tibet in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, he encountered a completely dissolute monastic caste in total chaos and where one could no longer speak of morals. At least this is what the historical records (the *Blue Annals*) report. Thurman suppresses this Lamaist moral collapse and simply maintains the opposite: “When Atisha arrived in Tibet, monastic practitioners were limiting themselves to strict moral and ritual observances” (Thurman 1998, p. 226). This is indeed a very euphemistic representation of the whoring and secularized monasteries against which Atisha took to the field with a new moral codex.

For Thurman, the Great Prayer Festival (Mönlam) institutionalized by Tsongkhapa and reactivated by the Fifth Dalai Lama, a raw Lamaist carnival in which monks were allowed absolutely everything and a truly horrible scapegoat ritual was performed, was a sacred event where “the power of compassion is manifest, the immediacy of grace is experienced” (Thurman 1998, p. 235). At another stage he says that, “[i]n Tibet, the Great Prayer Festival guaranteed the best of possibilities for everyone. People’s feelings of being in an apocalyptic time in a specially blessed and chosen land—in their own form of a “New Jerusalem”, a Kingdom of Heaven manifest on earth—had a powerful effect on the whole society” (Thurman 1998, pp. 238-239). When we compare this apotheosis of the said event with the already cited eyewitness report by Heinrich Harrer, we see the lack of restraint with which Thurman reveres the Tibet of old. Harrer, whose portrayal is confirmed by many other travel accounts, regarded the scenario completely differently: “As if emerging from hypnosis”, writes the mentor of the young Dalai Lama, “at this moment the tens of thousands spring from order in to chaos. The transition is so sudden, that one is speechless. Shouting, wild gesticulation .. they trample over one another, almost murder each other. The still-weeping prayers, ecstatically absorbed, become ravers. The monastic soldiers begin their duty! Huge fellows with stuffed shoulders and blackened faces — so that the deterrent effect becomes even stronger. Ruthlessly they lay into the crowd with their batons ... one takes the blows wailing, but even the beaten return again. As if they were possessed by demons” (Heinrich Harrer, 1984, p. 142). — Thurman’s “New Jerusalem”, possessed by demons on the roof of the world? —an interesting scenario for a horror film!

We find a further pinnacle of Thurman’s historical falsification in the portrait of the greatest Lamaist potentate, the Fifth Dalai Lama. Of all people, this “Priest-King” attuned to the accumulation of external power and pomp is built up by the author in to a hero of the “inner revolution”. He paints the picture of a prudent and farsighted fathers of his country (“a gentle genius, scholar, and reincarnate saint” — Thurman 1998, p. 248), who is compelled — against his will and his fundamentally Buddhist attitude — to conduct a n horrific “civil war” (in which he lets great numbers of monks from other orders be massacred by the Mongol warriors summoned to the country). Thurman presents the conflict as a quarrel between various warlords in which the “peaceful” monks become embroiled.

Here again, the opposite was the case: the two chief Tibetan Buddhist orders of the time (Gelugpa and Kagyupa) were pulling the strings, even if they let worldly armies battle for them. Thurman misrepresents this monastic war as a battle between cliques of nobles and ultimately “the final showdown in Tibet between militarism and monasticism” (Thurman 1998, p. 249), whereby the latter as the party of peace is victorious thanks to the genius of the Fifth Dalai Lama and goes on to all but establish a “Buddha paradise” on earth.

All this is a pious/impudent invention of the American Tibetologist. The merciless warrior mentality of the Fifth Dalai Lama spread fear and alarm among his foes. His dark occult side, his fascination for the sexual magic of the Nyingmapa (which he himself practiced), his unrestrained rewriting of history and much more; these are all highly unpleasant facts, which are deliberately concealed by Thurman, since an historically accurate portrait of the “Great Fifth” could have embarrassing consequences, as the Fourteenth Dalai Lama constantly refers to this predecessor of his and has announced him to be his greatest example.

It would be wrong to deny the Fifth Dalai Lama any political or administrative skill; he was, just like his contemporary, Louis the Fourteenth, to whom he is often compared, an “ingenious” statesman. But this made him no prince of peace. His goal consisted of resolutely placing the fate of the country in the hands of the clergy with himself as the undisputed spiritual and secular leader. To this end (like the Fourteenth Dalai Lama today) he played the various orders off against one another. The Fifth Dalai Lama formulated the political foundations of a “Buddhocracy” which Robert Thurman would be glad to see as the model for a future world community, and which we wish to examine more closely in the next section.

### **A worldwide Buddhocracy**

At the conference on Tibet in Bonn mentioned above (“Mythos Tibet”, 1996) Robert Thurman with stirring pathos prophesied the “fall of the West” and left no doubt that the future of our planet lies in a worldwide, as he stressed literally, “Buddhocracy”. Europe has renounced its sacred past, demystified its natural environment, established a secular realm, and closed off access to the sacred “represented by monasticism and its organized striving for perfection”. Materialism, industrialization and militarization have taken the place of the sacred (Thurman 1998, p. 246).

At the same time a reverse process has taken place in Tibet. Society has become increasingly sacralized and devoted itself to the creation of a “buddhaverse”. (In the wake of the Tibetologists’ criticisms in Bonn, Thurman appears to have opted for his own neologism “buddhaverse” in place of the somewhat offensive “Buddhocracy”; the meaning intended remains the same.) A re-enchantment of reality has taken place in Tibet, and the system is dedicated to the perfection of the individual. The warrior spirit has been dismantled. All these claims are untrue, and can be disproved by countless counterexamples. Nevertheless, Thurman presumes to declare them

expressions of traditional Tibet's "inner modernity", which is ultimately superior to Europe's "outer modernity": "As Europe was pushing away the Pope, the Church, and the enchantment of everyday life, Tibet was turning over the reins of its country to a new kind of government, which cannot properly be called 'theocratic', since the Tibetans do not believe in an omnipotent God, but which can be called 'Buddhocratic'" (Thurman 1998, p. 248). This form of government is supposed to guide our future. At the Tibet conference in Bonn, Thurman made this clearer: "Yes, not theocratic, because that brings [with it a] comparison to the Holy Roman Empire ... because it has the conception of an authoritarian God controlling the universe" (Thurman at the conference in Bonn). Thurman seems to think the concept of an "authoritarian Buddha" does not exist, although this is precisely what may be found at the basis of the Lamaist system.

For the author, the monasticization of Tibetan society was a lucky millennial event for humanity which reached its preliminary peak in the era in which the Gelugpa order was founded by Tsongkhapa (1357–1419) and the institution of the Dalai Lama was established. In Bonn Thurman praised this period as "the millennium of the fifteenth century of the planetary unique form of modern Tibetan society ... [which] led to the unfolding in the seventeenth century [of] what I call post-millennial, inwardly modern, mass-monastic, or even Buddhocratic [society]". Tsongkhapa is presented as the founding father of this "modern Tibet": he "was a spiritual prodigy. ... He perceived a cosmic shift from universe to buddhaverse" (Thurman 1998, pp. 232–233).

The Tibet of old was, according to Thurman, just such a buddhaverse, an earthly "Buddha paradise", governed by nonviolence and wisdom, generosity, sensitivity, and tolerance. An exemplary enlightened consciousness was cultivated in the monastic Jewel Community. The monasteries provided the guarantee that politics was conducted along ethical lines: "The monastic core provides the cocoon for the free creativity of the lay Jewel Community" (Thurman 1998, p. 294).

This "monastic form of government", pre-tested by Old Tibet, provides a vision for the future for Thurman: "I am very interested in this. I feel a very strong trend in this [direction]" (Thurman's presentation in Bonn). The "monasticization" which was then (i.e., in the fifteenth century) spreading through Asia whilst the doors to the monasteries of Europe were closing, has once again become significant on a global political level. "And if you study Max Weber carefully... in fact what secularization and industrial progress brought had a lot to do with the slamming of the monastery doors. ... So, a monastic form of government is an unthinkable thing for Western society. We often say Tibet is frozen in the Middle Ages because Tibet is not secularized in the way the Western world is! It moved out of the balance between sacred and secular and went into a sacralization process and enchanted the universe. The concrete proof of that was that the monasteries provided the government" (Thurman in Bonn).

Here, Thurman is paraphrasing Weber's thesis of the "disenchantment of the world" which accompanied the rise of capitalism. The "re-enchantment of the world" is a political program for him, which can only be carried out by Lamaist monks. Monasticism "is the shelter and training

ground for the nonviolent 'army', the shock troops for the sustained social revolution the Buddha initiated ..." (Thurman 1998, p. 294, § 15). The monastic clergy would progressively assume control of political matters via a three-stage plan. In the final phase of this plan, "the society is able to enjoy the universe of enlightenment, and Jewel Community institutions [the monasteries] openly take responsibility for the society's direction" (Thurman 1998, p. 296, § 24).

But this is no unreal utopia, since "Tibetan society is the only one in planetary history in which this third phase has been partially reached" (Thurman 1998, p. 296, § 25). In this sentence Thurman quite plainly proclaims a Buddhocracy along Lamaist lines to be the next model for the world community! Elsewhere, the Tibetologist is more precise: "The countercultural monastic movement no longer needs to lie low and is able to give the ruling powers advice, spiritual and social. Enlightened sages can begin to advise their royal disciples on how to conduct the daily affairs of society, such as what should be their policies and practices. Likewise, after a long period of such evolution, the entire movement can reach a cool fruition, when the countercultural enlightenment movement becomes mainstream and openly takes responsibility for the whole society, which eventually happened in Tibet" (Thurman 1998, p. 166, footnote).

According to Thurman, the Lamaist clergy assumes political power with — as we shall see — the incarnation of a super-being at its helm, an absolute monarch, who unites spiritual and worldly power within himself. The triumphant advance of the monastic system began in India in around 500 B.C.E. and spread throughout all of Asia in the intervening years. But this, Thurman says, is only a prelude: "The phenomenal success of monasticism, eventually Eurasia-wide, can be understood as the progressive truth-conquest of the world" (Thurman 1998, p. 105). Pie in the sky, or a event soon to come? Thurman's statements on this are contradictory. In his book he talks of a "hope for the future". But in interviews with the press, he has let it be known that he will experience the Buddhization of America in his own lifetime. In 1997, his friend, the Hollywood actor Richard Gere, was also convinced that the transformation of the world into a Buddhocracy would occur suddenly, like an atomic explosion, and that the "critical mass" would soon be reached (*Herald Tribune*, 20 March 1997, p. 6).

According to the author, the Lamaist power elite of the coming "Buddhocracy" is basically immortal because of the incarnation system. They already pulled the political strings in Tibet in the past, and will, in the author's opinion, assume this role for the entire world in future: "Whatever the spiritual reality of these reincarnations, the social impact of this form of leadership was immense. It sealed the emerging spirituality of Tibetan society, in that death, which ordinarily interrupts progress in any society, could no longer block positive development. Just as Shakyamuni could be present to the practitioner through the initiation procedure and the sophisticated visualization techniques, so fully realized saints and sages were not withdrawn by death from their disciples, who depended on them to attain fulfillment (Thurman 1998, p. 231).

One can only be amazed — at the impudence with which Thurman praises the "Buddhocracy" of the Lamas as the highest form of "democracy"; at how he portrays Tibetan Buddhism, which is

based upon a ritual dissolution of the individual, as the highest level of individual development; at how he depicts Tantrism, with its morbid sexual magic techniques for male monks to absorb feminine energies, as the only religion in which god and goddess are worshipped as balanced equals; at how he glorifies the cruel war gods and warrior monks of the Land of Snows as pacifists; at how he presents the medieval/monastic social form of Tibet as an expression of the modern and as offering the only model for a global world-society.

### **Tibet a land of enlightenment?**

The Tibet of old, with its monastic culture was, according to Thurman, the cosmic energy body which irradiated our world in enlightened consciousness. “Hidden in the last thousand years of Tibet’s civilization”, the author says, “is a continuous process of inner revolution and cool evolution. In spiritual history, Tibet has been the secret dynamo that throughout this millennium has slowly turned the outer world toward enlightenment. Thus Tibetan civilization’s unique role on the inner plane of history assumes a far greater importance than material history would indicate” (Thurman 1998, p. 225). In Thurman’s version of history, it was not the Western bourgeoisie which fought for its freedoms and human rights in battle with the institutions of the Church; rather, all this was thought out in advance by holy men meditating among the Himalayan peaks: “The recent appearance of modern consciousness in the industrial world is not something radically new or unprecedented. Modern consciousness has been developed all over Asia in the Buddhist subcultures for thousands of years” (Thurman 1998, p. 255). —And it flowed into the consciousness of the modern, Western cultural elite as an Eastern energy source. That is, to speak clearly, the Tibetan monks meditating were one of the causes of the European Enlightenment. A bold thesis indeed, in which a Tibet controlled by a belief in ghosts, oracles, torture chambers, the oppression of women, and human super-beings becomes the cradle of modern rationalism.

The enlightening radiation began, says Thurman, with the Tibetan scholar Tsongkhapa’s edifice of teachings and the founding of the Gelugpa order: “This tremendous release of energy caused by thousands of minds becoming totally liberated in a short time was a planetary phenomenon, like a great spiritual pulsar emitting enlightenment in waves broadcast around the globe” (Thurman 1998, p. 233). Accordingly, Thurman considers all of the great Tibetan scholars of past centuries to be more significant and comprehensive than their European “peers”. They were “scientific heroes”, “the quintessence of scientists in this nonmaterialistic civilization [i.e., Tibet]” (quoted by Lopez in *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, p. 81). As “psychonauts” they conquered inner space in contrast to the western “astronauts” (again quoted by Lopez, 1998, p. 81). But the “stars” of modern European philosophy like Hume and Kant, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, Hegel and Heidegger, Thurman speculates, could also at some future time turn out to be line-holders for and emanations of the Bodhisattva of knowledge, *Manjushri* (Lopez, 1998, p. 264). *Ex oriente lux* — now also true for occidental science.

This incorporation of the Western cultural heroes is an underground current which flows through the entire neo-Buddhist scene. It is outwardly strictly denied, through the Dalai Lama’s demands for tolerance in broad publicity. In contrast, writings accumulate in the milieu, which celebrate

Jesus Christ as an avatar of the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara* for example, the same super-being who has also been incarnated as the Dalai Lama. A recurrent image of modern myth building is the placement of the Tibetans on a par with the Nazarene.

### Thurman as “high priest” of the Kalachakra Tantra

A worldwide Buddhocratic vision of Tibetan Buddhism is contained in what is known as the *Kalachakra Tantra* (the “Wheel of Time”). We have studied and commented upon this central Lamaist ritual in detail. The goal of the *Kalachakra Tantra* is the construction of a superhuman being, the ADI BUDDHA, whose control encompasses the entire universe, both spiritually and politically, “a mythical world-conqueror” (Thurman 1998, p. 292, § 5).

From a metapolitical point of view, Robert Thurman appears to have been appointed to implant the ideas of the *Kalachakra Tantra* in the West. We have already noted that the teacher the Dalai Lama assigned him to was Khen Losang Dondrub, Abbot of the Namgyal monastery which is especially commissioned to perform the *Kalachakra* ritual. In the USA he was in constant contact with the Kalmyk lama Geshe Wangyal (1901–1983). Lama Wangyal was Robert Thurman’s actual “line guru”, and this line leads via Wangyal directly to the old master Agvan Dorjiev (Lama Wangyal’s guru). Dorjiev the Buriat, Wangyal the Kalmyk, and Thurman the American thus form a chain of initiation. From a tantric point of view the spirit of the master lives on in the form of the pupil. One can thus assume that Thurman as Dorjiev’s successor represents an emanation of the extremely aggressive protective divinity Vajrabhairava who is supposed to have become incarnate in the Buriat. At any rate the American must be drawn into the context of the global *Shambhala* utopia, which was the principal concern of Dorjiev’s metapolitics.

What Thurman understands by this can be most clearly illustrated by a vision which was bestowed upon him in a dream in September 1979, before he saw the Dalai Lama again for the first time in eight years: “The night before he landed in New York, I dreamed he was manifesting the pure land mandala palace of the Kalachakra Buddha right on top of the Waldorf Astoria building. The entire collection of dignitaries of the city, mayors and senators, corporate presidents and kings, sheikhs and sultans, celebrities and stars—all of them were swept up into the dance of 722 deities of the three buildings of the diamond palace like pinstriped bees swarming on a giant honeycomb. The amazing thing about the Dalai Lama’s flood of power and beauty was that it appeared totally effortless. I could feel the space of His Holiness’s heart, whence all this arose. It was relaxed, cool, an amazing well of infinity” (Thurman 1998, p. 18).

The magic projection of the Tibetan “god-king” as ADI BUDDHA and world ruler cannot be illustrated more vividly. He reigns as some kind of queen bee in the middle of New York, and lets the world’s greatest, whom he has bewitched with sweet honey, dance to his tune. It is typical that there is no mention of grass roots democracy here, and that it is just the political, business, and show business Establishment which performs the sweet dance of the bees. Anyone who is

aware how much significance is granted to such dreams in the world of Tibetan initiation will without further ado recognize a metapolitical program in Thurman's vision. [1]

In 1992, as Director of Tibet House in New York City which he co-founded with Richard Gere, he sponsored "the *Kalachakra* Initiation at New York's Madison Square Garden." (Farrer-Halls 1998, p. 92) The Tibet Center houses a three dimensional Kalachakra Mandala and the only life sized statue of the Kalachakra deity outside of Tibet. Following the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, "The Samaya Foundation, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and the Port Authority jointly sponsored the Wheel of Time (*Kalachakra*) Sand Mandala, or Circle of Peace, in the lobby of Tower 1." (Darton 1999, p. 219) For over thirty days, many of the World Trade Center workers and visitors were invited by the Namgyal Monks to participate in the construction of the mandala. It is said that, "Its shape symbolized nature's unending cycle of creation and destruction and in the countless grains of its material, it celebrated life's energy taking ephemeral form, then returning to its source. At the end of the mandala's month long lifespan, the monks swept up the sand and "offered it to the Hudson River." This ritual, they believed, purified the environment. (Darton 1999, p. 219)

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Report of a former participant of the Kalachakra Ceremony in New York: "Get a call from one of my Kalachakra sisters I haven't heard from since the Indiana Kalachakra in '99. [...] The topic shifted to the Kalachakra Mandala that was made at One World Trade Center. I was at the dissolution ceremony there, may be around '96. The monks gathered up all the sand from the Mandala at 1 WTC, put it in a vase, then carried it across the bridge into World Financial Center through the Winter Garden, then dumped the sand ceremoniously into the Hudson River for the sake of World Peace. The surface of the river glittered with the afternoon sun, and I cried. 5 years later, the whole building is gone, just like the sand Mandala."

See: <http://home.earthlink.net/~kamitera/news.html>

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Thurman's devoted commitment as Lamaist initiate, his absolute loyalty to the Dalai Lama, his consistent vision of an earthly "Buddha paradise", his uncompromising affirmation of a Buddhocratic state, his involvement with the world of the Tibetan gods which reaches even into his own dreams, his systematic training by the highest Tibetan lamas over many years—all these certify Thurman to be a "Shambhala warrior", a Buddhist hero, who according to legend prepares for the establishment of the kingdom of Shambhala over our globe. This is the goal of the Kalachakra ritual (the "Wheel of Time" ritual) performed all over the world by the Dalai Lama. Thurman has, he reports, seen the Dalai Lama in a vision as the supreme time god above the Waldorf Astoria. But even here he conceals that the Shambhala myth is not peaceful, and can only be realized after a world war in which all nonbelievers (non-Buddhists) are destroyed.

Perhaps such a perspective frightens some Western intellectuals? No worries, Thurman reassures them, "who is afraid of the Dalai Lama? Who is afraid of Avalokiteshvara? No Tibetans are afraid" (Thurman in Bonn). How could one be afraid of the supreme enlightened being currently on earth? He, in whom all three levels are compressed, "that of the selfless monk, the king, and the great adept" (Thurman), who is (as great adept) preparing the creation of "a

buddhaversal human society” (Thurman 1998, p. 39), even if he (as king and statesman) is still concentrating chiefly on the concerns of Tibet. Then, “Tibet’s unique focus on enlightenment civilization makes the nation crucial to the world’s development of spiritual and social balance” (Thurman 1998, p. 39).

Thurman is convinced that the Dalai Lama represents a projection of the ADI BUDDHA, who can liberate the world from its valley of sorrows. He describes very precisely the micro- and macrocosmic dimensions of such a redemptive being in the form of the Fifth Dalai Lama. If humanity were to recognize the divine presence behind the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, it could calmly place its political matters in his hands, just as the Tibetan populace did in the time of the “Great Fifth”: “Small wonder”, Thurman tells to his readers. “Suppose the people of a catholic country were to share a perception of a particular spiritual figure as not simply a representative of God, as in the Pope being the vicar of Christ, but as an actual incarnation of the Savior—or, say an incarnation of the Archangel Gabriel. In such a situation it would not be strange for the nation to reach a point where the divine would actually take responsibility for the government. In Tibet, this moment was the culmination of centuries of grass-roots millennial consciousness, the political ratification of the millennial direction that had been intensifying since the Great Prayer Festival tradition had begun in 1409. The sense of the presence of an enlightened being was widespread enough for the people to join together after the last conflict and entrust to him their land and their fate” (Thurman 1998, pp. 250–251).

There is no need to read between the lines, simply paying close attention to the text of his book is enough to be able to recognize that, for Thurman, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama represents the quintessence of political wisdom and decisive power for the coming millennium. The author draws attention to the five principles of his planetary political program: “nonviolence, individualism, education, and altruistic correctness. The fifth [principle], global democratism, is exemplified in His Holiness the Great Fourteenth Dalai Lama himself” (Thurman 1998, p. 279). The Tibetan “god-king” as the incarnation of universal democracy—a true piece of bravura in Thurman’s “political theology”. No wonder the “god-king” applauds him so roundly in his foreword: “I commend him for his careful study and clear explanations, and I recommend his insights for your own reflections” (Thurman 1998, p. xiv).

According to Thurman, the USA is the first western country in which the lamas’ Buddhocratic vision will prevail: “Most of the teachers from the various enlightenment movements seem to agree on one thing: If there is to be a renaissance of enlightenment sciences in our times, it will have to begin in America. America is the land of extreme dichotomies: the great materialism and the greatest disillusionment with materialism; great self-indulgence and great self-transcendence” (Thurman 1998, p. 280). The Dalai Lama (“the fifth [principle of] global democratism”) as the next American president? —But if he dies?—No worries, thanks to the system of incarnation he may remain among us as priest and king for ever.

Thurman's methods, adapting himself to the point of self-deception to the consciousness and the customs of his environment (in this case the western democratic environment), but without losing sight of the actual grand metapolitical goal, has a long tradition in Tibet. Padmasambhava, for instance, Buddhized the Land of Snows by integrating with aplomb the various tribal cultures which he encountered on his missionary travels into his tantric system, together with their particular ideas and cultic practices. In doing so he was so skillful that the pre-Buddhist inhabitants of Tibet believed Buddhism to be no more than the realization of their own traditional expectations of salvation. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama is masterfully repeating this heuristic principle from his eighth-century incarnation on the world stage. In the meantime he knows all the variations and rules of the game of Western civilization and has managed to generate a public image as a great reformer and democrat who brilliantly combines modern political fundamentals with old Eastern teachings of wisdom. There are countless sermons from him in which he strongly advises his audience to stay true to their own religious tradition, since in the end they all come to the same thing. Such superior invitations have as we shall see a *double-bind* effect. People are so enthused by the ostensible tolerance of Tibetan Buddhism and its supreme representative that they become converts to the *Dharma* and ensnared in the tantric web.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] During the UN-organized Millennium Festival of Religions at the end of August 2000, at which over a thousand religious representatives were present, the Dalai Lama was supposed to stay in the Waldorf Astoria. Without doubt, thanks to his charisma and pretended precept of tolerance, the Kundun would have become the center of the entire occasion. But after great pressure was applied by the Chinese he was not invited. At this, a segment of the organizers resolved to encourage him to take part in a kind of private rally at the end of the assembly in the Waldorf Astoria hotel. But the Kundun declined. Robert Thurman's vision of the *Kalachakra* Buddha at the summit of the Waldorf Astoria did not eventuate.

## 16. TACTICS, STRATEGIES, FORGERIES, ILLUSIONS

From a western point of view, religion and politics have been neatly and cleanly separated from one another since the modern era (18<sup>th</sup> century). In this sense a clear distinction is drawn here between the spread of Tantric Buddhism and the question of Tibet's international legal status. However, for an ancient culture like the Tibetan one, such a division is just not possible. In it, all levels — the mystic, the mythic, the symbolic, and the ritual — are addressed by every political event. From a Tibetan viewpoint it is thus completely logical that the liberation of the Land of Snows from the claws of the Chinese dragon be blown up into an exemplary deed that should benefit the whole planet. "To save Tibet means to save the world!" is a widespread slogan, even among committed Westerners.

Just like the teachings of the Buddha, the political issue of Tibet at first evoked little resonance among the western public. Those who broached the topic of the fate of the Tibetan people in American and European governmental circles generally encountered rejection and disinterest. But this dismissive stance changed in the mid-eighties. With increasing frequency, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was officially received by western heads of state who had previously refused to be in public contact with him for fear of Chinese protests.

### The "Tibet Lobby"

Since 1985 the so-called *Tibet lobby* has been at work in numerous countries. This is a cross-party collection of parliamentary representatives who in their respective parliaments advocate a Tibet resolution that morally condemns China for its constant human rights abuses and "cultural genocide". A recognition of Tibet as an autonomous state is not linked to such resolutions. At the *Tibet Support Groups Conference* in Bonn (in 1996), Tim Nunn from England gave a paper on the methods (the *upaya*) of successful lobbying: well-groomed appearance, diplomatic language, proper dress, skilled presentation, and the like. Mr. Nunn was able to point to successes — 131 members of the British Lower House had engaged themselves for the cause of the Land of Snows in London (Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, 1996, pp. 77ff.).

In the USA the lawyer Michael van Walt van Praag has successfully argued the interests of the Tibetan government in exile to both Senators and Congressmen. He succeeded in getting a resolution on Tibet passed in the U.S. Senate. One of his greatest political successes was when in 1991 the *Kundun* was permitted to take his place in the rotunda and address the American House of Congress. Afterwards he met with President George Bush. Bush signed an official document in which Tibet was described as an "occupied country". Since 1990 *The Voice of America* has begun broadcasting programs in Tibetan. A new broadcaster, *Free Asia*, which also

has a Tibet department, has recently been approved by Congress. As of 1997, the *State Department* appointed a “special representative for Tibet” who is supposed to have the task of negotiating between the *Kundun* and China.

In early September 1995, the Dalai Lama smilingly embraced Senator Jesse Helms, renowned for his ultra-conservative stance. This was a high point in the thoroughgoing reverence the Republicans have shown him.

The Democrats barely acknowledged such conservative solidarity, since it was they who smoothed the way for the “liberal” god-king to reach a broad public. The American President, Bill Clinton, and his Vice-president, Al Gore, were initially reserved and ambivalent towards the Dalai Lama, whom they have met several times. The American government’s position is expressed unambiguously in a statement from 1994: „Because we do not recognize Tibet as an independent state, the United States does not conduct diplomatic relations with the *self-styled* the ‘Tibetan government-in-exile’“ it says there (Goldstein, 1997, p. 121).

But after several meetings with President Clinton and his wife Hillary the god-king was able to make a lasting impression on the presidential couple. Clinton committed himself as never before to resolving the question of Tibet. One of the major points of his trip to China (in 1998) was to encourage Jiang Zemin to take up contact with the Dalai Lama. Every western head of state who visits the Middle Kingdom now reiterates this, which has led to success: in the meantime the two parties (Beijing and Dharamsala) confer constantly behind closed doors.

In 1989 the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel peace prize. The fact that he received this high accolade has less to do with the political situation in Tibet than, above all, the bloody events in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, where numerous Chinese students protesting against the regime lost their lives. The West wanted to morally condemn China and the Tibet lobby was successful in proposing an honoring of His Holiness as the best means of doing so.

From now on the god-king possessed an international prominence like never before. The Oslo award could almost be said to have granted him a passport and access to the majority of world heads of state. There was hardly a president who still in the face of Chinese protests refused to officially receive the god-king, at least as a religious representative. In Ireland, France, Liechtenstein, Austria, Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria, Russia, the USA, Canada, England, Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, Israel, Japan, Taiwan, Gabun, Australia, New Zealand, several South American countries — everywhere the “modest monk” was honored like a pontiff.

In 1996 the lobbyists succeeded in maneuvering Germany into a spectacular confrontation with China through the passing of a resolution Tibet in the *Bundestag* (the German lower house). The resolution was supported by all parties in parliament, be they green, left, liberal, or conservative. The paradoxical side to this move was that both the Dalai Lama and the Chinese were able to profit from it whilst the naïve Germans had to pay up. This coup represents the *Kundun's* party's greatest political success in the West to date. On the other hand, the Chinese succeeded in inducing the intimidated German federal government into continuing to grant China the much desired Hermes securities formerly refused them. For Beijing, with this agreement in hand, the question of Tibet in its relations with Germany was resolved for now. Even if we cannot speak of a direct cooperation here, according to the *cui bonum* principle the two Asian parties profited greatly by drawing an essentially uninvolved nation into the conflict.

The media management of the *Kundun's* followers is by now perfect. Numerous offices in all countries, above all the *Tibet Information Network* (TIN) in London, supply the press with material about the serious shortcomings in the Land of Snows, life in the community of Tibetan exiles, and the activities of the god-king. There is successful cooperation with Chinese dissidents. Reports from Beijing, which admittedly can only be treated with great caution but nonetheless include much important information, are uniformly dismissed by Dharamsala as communist propaganda. This one-sidedness in the assessment of Tibetan affairs has in the meantime also been adopted by the western press corps.

For example, when at the invitation of the Chinese the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, visited Lhasa as the first western head of government and afterwards announced that the situation in the Tibet capital was by no means so criminal as it was portrayed to be by the Dalai Lama's office, he was lambasted in the media, who declared that he was prepared to sell his morals for financial considerations. But when he was there, the former American President Jimmy Carter, renowned for his great commitment to human rights, also gained the same impression (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 232).

The issue of Tibet has become an important means of anchoring Tantric Buddhism in the West. As a *political issue* it appears in the West to be completely divorced from any religious instrumentalization. The *Kundun* appears in public as a campaigner for peace, a democrat, a humanist, as an advocate of the oppressed. This skillfully adapted western/ethical "mixture" gains him unrestricted access to the highest levels of government. Although some politicians may see a confirmation of their ideals in the (ostensible) behavior of the Dalai Lama, fundamentally it is probably power-political motives which determine Western policy on Asia. The West's relationship with China is namely extremely ambivalent. On the one hand there is a hope for good economic and political ties to the prospering country with its unbounded markets, on the other a deep-seated fear of a future Chinese superpower. The political situation in Tibet and the circumstances of the Tibetans in exile afford sufficient grounds to be employed as an argument against a potential Chinese imperialism.

## The “Greens”

In Germany the issue of Tibet was first taken up by *green* politicians, primarily by the parliamentary representatives Petra Kelly and Gert Bastian. Their pro-Tibetan intervention is still marked by a continuing success. “Major entertainers and environmentalists”, wrote the *Spiegel* magazine, “have found a common denominator in their commitment to the kingdom on the roof of the world. *Hollywood* meets *Robin Hood* — Tibet’s Buddhism is the common denominator” (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 109). Petra Kelly’s selfless engagement was later interpreted as a form of “engaged Buddhism” whose principle concerns were said to include the defense of human rights, ecological responsibility, and sexual equality. [1] The *Kundun* cleverly co-opted all these western demands and suddenly (at the end of the eighties) appeared on the political stage as a spearhead of the global ecological movement.

„Green politics” and environmental issues have in the meantime attained a central place within the political propaganda of the Tibetans in exile. There are hundreds of conferences such as the one introduced by His Holiness in 1993 under the title of „Ecological responsibility: A dialog with Buddhism”. The *Kundun* is a member of the ecologically oriented *Goal Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival*. In 1992 he visited the *Greenpeace* flagship, the *Rainbow Warrior*. And at the „global forum” in Rio de Janeiro the Dalai Lama had far-reaching things to say about the earth’s problems: „This blue planet of ours is a delightful habitat. Its life is our life; its future our future. Indeed, the earth acts like a mother to all. Like children, we are dependent on them. ... Our Mother Earth is teaching us a lesson in universal responsibility”, the god-king announced emotionally. ([www.tibet.com/Eco/dleco4.html](http://www.tibet.com/Eco/dleco4.html))

Since the late eighties it has become normal at international environmental meetings all around the world to describe the Tibet of old as an ecological paradise, where wild gazelles and “snow lions” eat from the monks’ hands, as the Dalai Lama’s brother (Thubten Jigme Norbu) put it at a Tibet conference in Bonn (in 1996). For thousands of years, it says in edifying writings, the Tibetans have revered plants and animals as their equals. “Historical” idylls such as the following are taken literally by innocently trusting Westerners: „The Tibetan traditional heritage, which is known to be over three thousand years old[!], can be distinguished as one of [the] foremost traditions of the world in which ... humankind and its natural environment have persistently remained in perfect harmony” (Huber, 2001, p. 360).

What glowed in the past should also shine in the future. Accordingly many western followers of the *Kundun* imagine how the once flourishing garden will bloom again after his return to the Land of Snows. His Holiness is also generously accommodating towards this image of desire and promises to found the first ecological state on earth in a “liberated” Tibet — for many “Greens” a glimmer of hope in a world that constantly neglects its environmental responsibilities.

Today, among many committed members of the international “ecological scene”, being green, environmentally friendly, nature-loving, vegetarian, and Tibetan Buddhist, are all but identical. But

is there any truth in such an equivalence? Was the Tibet of old really an “earthly garden of paradise”? Is the essence of Tantric Buddhism pro-nature and animal-loving?

### *Tibetan Buddhism's hostility towards nature*

No complicated research is required to establish that the inhabitants of the Tibet of old, like all highlands peoples, had an ambivalent relationship with nature, in which fear and horror in the face of constant catastrophes (turns in the weather, cold, famines, accidents, illnesses) predominated. Nature, which was (and often still is) in fact experienced *animistically* as being inhabited by spirits, was only rarely a friend and partner; instead, most of the time it was a malevolent and destructive force, in many instances a terrifying demoness. We have presented some of these anti-human nature spirits in our chapter on *Anarchy and Buddhism*. Using violence, trickery, and magic they have to be compelled, tamed, and not unrarely killed.

In a comprehensive study (*Civilized Shamans*), the Tibet researcher Geoffrey Samuel has demonstrated that the violent subjugation of a wild nature is a drama constantly repeated within the Tibetan monastic civilization: beginning with the nailing down of the Tibetan primeval earth mother, *Srinmo*, by King *Songtsen Gampo* so as to erect the central shrines of the Land of Snows over her wounds, the construction of every Lamaist temple (no matter where in the world) was and is prefaced by a ritual that refreshes the dreadful stigmatization of the “earth mother”. *Srinmo* is undoubtedly the (Tibetan) emanation of “Mother Earth” or “Mother Nature” whom the Dalai Lama so emotionally pleads to rescue at international ecology congresses (“the earth acts like a mother to all”). It was the *Kundun* himself — if we take his doctrine of incarnation literally — who in the form of *Songtsen Gampo* many centuries ago nailed down “Mother Earth” (*Srinmo*). He himself laid the bloody foundations (the maltreated body of *Srinmo*) upon which his clerical and andocentric system rests. It is he himself who repeats this aggressive “taming act” at every public performance of the *Kalachakra* ritual: before a sand mandala is created, the local nature spirits (some interpreters say the earth mother *Srinmo*) are nailed to the ground with *phurbas* (ritual daggers).

The equation of nature with the feminine principle is an archetypical move that we find in most cultures. The Greek *Gaia* and Tibetan *Srinmo* are just two different names for the same divine substance of the earth mother. In European alchemy, nature is the starting point (the *prima materia*) for the magic experiments and likewise a *principium feminile*. We have examined the close interconnection of alchemy and Tantrism in detail and proved that in both systems the feminine principle is sacrificed for the benefit of a masculine experimenter. By adopting for ourselves the tantric way of seeing things in which everything is linked to everything else, we were able to recognize the nailing down of *Srinmo* (the symbol-laden primal event of Tibetan history) as the historical predecessor of the “tantric/alchemic female sacrifice”. *Songtsen Gampo* sacrificed the “earth mother” so as to acquire her energies for himself, just as every tantra master sacrifices his *karma mudra* so as to absorb her *gynergy*.

In recent decades numerous books have appeared that address the disrespect, enslavement, and dismemberment of nature by the modern scientific world view and technology. Many of the analyses, especially when they are the work of feminist authors, indicate that the destruction and control of nature are to be equated with the superiority of the masculine principle over the feminine, of the god over the goddess, in brief with the supremacy of patriarchy. This critical view of the history of oppression and exploitation of the scientific age has largely obscured the view of atavistic religions' hostility towards nature, especially when these come from the east, like Tibetan Buddhism.

But Buddhist Tantrism, we would like to unreservedly claim, is hostile to nature and therefore ecologically hostile *in principle*, because it destroys the natural, sensual, and feminine sphere so as to render it useful for the masculine. Further, in the performance of his enlightenment rituals, every tantra master burns up all the *natural* components of his own human body and, parallel to this (on a macrocosmic level), the entire *natural* universe. From a traditional viewpoint nature consists of a checkered mixture of the different elements (fire, water, earth, air, ether). In Tantrism, however, fire destroys the other elementary constituents. In the final instance it is the "fiery" SPIRIT which subjugates everything else, but NATURE in particular. Let us recall that *Avalokiteshvara*, the incarnation father of the Dalai Lama, acts as the "Lord of Fire" and the Bodhisattva of our age.

Nor were the centers of civilization in former Tibet at all environmentally friendly. The Lhasa of tradition, for instance, capital of the Lamaist world, could hardly be described as an exemplary ecological site but rather, as a number of world travelers have reported, was until the mid-twentieth century one of the dirtiest cities on the planet. As a rule, refuse was tipped unto the street. The houses had no toilets. Everywhere, wherever they were, the inhabitants unburdened themselves. Dead animals were left to rot in public places. For such reasons the stench was so penetrating and nauseating that the XIII Dalai Lama felt sick every time he had to traverse the city. Nobles who stepped out usually held a handkerchief over their nose.

It is even more absurd to describe the Tibetan monastic society as a vegetarian culture. The production and consumption of meat have always been counted among the most important branches of the country's economy (not least because of the climatic conditions). It is indeed true that a devout Tibetan may not kill an animal himself, but he is not forbidden from eating it. Hence the slaughter is performed by those of other faiths, primarily Moslems. The *Kundun* is also a keen meat eater, albeit, if one is to believe him, not out of enthusiasm but rather for health reasons. Anyone who is also aware of the great contempt Buddhism in general shows for being reborn as an animal can only wonder at such eco-paradisiacal-vegetarian retrospection now on offer in the "scholarly history" of the exiled Tibetans.

But by now the Tibetans in exile themselves gladly believe in such ecological fairytales. For them it is alone the brutal Chinese (whose behavior towards Mother Earth is no better nor worse than any other capitalist country, however) who are the villains and stand accused (in this instance

rightly) of destroying the ancient forests of the country and because they pay high prices for aphrodisiacs won from the bones of the snow leopard. But there are also some factual objectors to the opinion that the Tibet of old was an eco-paradise. The Tibetans were never more ecologically aware than other peoples, writes Jamyan Norbu, co-director of the Tibetan Culture Institute in Dharamsala, and warns against dangerous myth making (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 119).

### **Petra Kelly and Gert Bastian**

In this section, which we introduced with the two German “Greens”, Petra Kelly and Gert Bastian, we would like to draw attention to some interesting speculations in the Buddhist scene concerning the reunification of Germany. The Dalai Lama rarely becomes directly and openly involved in world politics aside from the issue of Tibet unless calling for peace in general. There are nevertheless numerous occult rumors in circulation among his followers that suggest him to be the political director of the world who holds the strings from “another dimension” in his hands. For example, there has been talk that the fall of the Berlin Wall was to be attributed to him. Among other things, the fact that at the exact point where the first break in the wall was created (a scene broadcast all around the world) there stood a graffiti reading *Long Live Dalai Lama* is offered as proof of this.

In fact, six months before the German reunification the *Kundun* had stood praying before the “wall of shame” with a candle in his hand. The pacifist, opponent of atomic energy, environmentalist and committed campaigner for the freedom of Tibet, Petra Kelly, had been able to motivate him to cross the East German border together with his entire retinue in December 1989. After the candle ceremony mentioned, the group were ferried to a *Round Table* discussion with citizens’ rights groups by the GDR state security service (the infamous *Stasi*, or secret police). [2]



***The first break in the “fall of the wall” of Berlin.***

***See the graffiti “Long live Dalai [Lama]”***

Petra Kelly later described the situation as a political vacuum in which the democratic opposition presented the vision of transforming the former GDR into a non-aligned state without a military or nuclear weapons that would align itself with neither capitalist nor communist ideas. The Dalai Lama was assured that he would be the first guest of this new state and that Tibet’s autonomy would be recognized as the first act of foreign affairs. The German participants in this conversation regarded themselves as a kind of provisional government. All were said to have been deeply moved by the presence of His Holiness. “Only six months later, on 22 June 1990”, writes Stephen Batchelor, “his prayer was answered when Checkpoint Charlie was ‘solemnly dismantled’” (Batchelor, 1994, p. 378).

The Dalai Lama as a political magician who brought down the Berlin Wall with his prayers? Such conceptions lay the foundations for a “metapolitics” in which international events are influenced by symbolic actions. Petra Kelly probably thought along these lines; her extraordinary devotion to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan cause is otherwise hard to comprehend.

The pacifist was certainly uninformed about the *Kalachakra Tantra*’s aggressive/warlike core, the androcentric sexual magic of Tibetan Buddhism, and the dark chapters in the Tibetan and Mongolian history. Like thousands of others, she followed His Holiness’s charm and messages of peace and was blind to the gods of the *Vajrayana*’s obsessions with power at work through him.

As she and her de facto, Gert Bastian, visited Dharamsala in 1988, they were both, despite having an eagle eye for every minor infringement of democracy in the German Federal Republic, “enormously impressed by the extremely democratic discussions” that had taken place in the parliament of the Tibetans in exile. This was a total misassessment of the situation — as we have already shown at length and as anyone who has the smallest insight into the inner political affairs of Tibetans in exile knows, their popular representation is a farce (*Tibetan Review*, January 1989, p. 15). But not for Petra Kelly — following her visit to Dharamsala she was so completely entranced by the *Kundun*’s charm and humane political mask that the issue of Tibet became for her the quintessential “moral touchstone of international politics” (*Tibetan Review*, July 1993, p. 19). In concrete terms, that meant the politicians our world stood at a threshold: if they supported the Dalai Lama they would be following the path of morality and virtue; if they turned against the *Kundun* or simply remained passive, then they would be steering down the road to immorality!

The green politician Petra Kelly completely failed to perceive the religiously motivated power politics and the tantric occultism of Dharamsala. Like many other women she became a female chess piece (a queen) in the *Kundun*’s game of strategy, one who opened doors to the German parliament and the upper political ranks for him.

### **The illusory world of interreligious dialog and the ecumenical movement**

Although dominated by culturally fixed images and rituals like every other religion, Tibetan Buddhism initially presents itself as a tradition that is tied to neither a culture, a society, nor a race. We hear from every lama that the teachings of the Shakyamuni Buddha consist exclusively in the experiences of each individual. Anybody can test their credibility in his or her own religious practices. Being of another non-Buddhist confession is no obstacle to such sacred exercises.

This, in the light of the tantric ritual system and the “baroque” Tibetan pantheon feigned, purist and liberal basic attitude allows His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama to present himself as being so tolerant and open minded that he has been celebrated for years as the “most open minded and liberal ecclesiastical dignitary” on the planet. His readiness to engage in dialog has all but become a catchphrase.

In now presenting the *Kundun*’s interreligious activities, we always have clearly in mind an awareness that at heart the entire Lamaist system is and wants to be incompatible with other faiths. Let us review the reasons for this once more, summarized in seven points. Tantric Buddhism, especially the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the associated *Shambhala myth*, includes:

1. The extermination of those of other faiths
2. A warlike philosophy of violence

3. Foundations for a neofascist ideology
4. Contempt for the person, the individual (in favor of the gods), and especially for women (in favor of the tantra masters)
5. The linking of religious and state power
6. World conquest and the establishment of a global Buddhocracy via manipulative and warlike means

In the face of these points the *Kundun's* ecumenical activity remains a lie for as long as he continues to abide by the principles of the tantric ritual system and the ideological/political fundamentals of the *Shambhala myth* (and the associated grasp for the world throne). It is nonetheless of important tactical significance for him and has proved to be an excellent means of spreading the ideas of Lamaism all over the world without objection.

This *indirect* missionary method has a long tradition in Tibetan history. As Padmasambhava (*Guru Rinpoche*) won the Land of Snows over to Tantrism in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, he never went on a direct offensive by openly preaching the fundamentals of the *dharma*. As an ingenious manipulator, he succeeded in employing the language, images, symbols, and gods of the local religions as a means of transporting the Indian Buddhism he had brought with him. The tribes to whom he preached were convinced that the *dharma* was nothing more than a clear interpretation of their old religious conceptions. They did not even need to give up their deities (even if these were most cruel) if they were to “convert” to tantric Buddhism, since Padmasambhava integrated these into his own system.

Even the *Kalachakra Tantra*, based on a marked and pervasive concept of the enemy, recommends the manipulation of those of other faiths. Surprisingly, the “Time Tantra” permits the performance of non-Buddhist rites by the tantra master. But there is an important condition here, namely that the mystic physiology of the practicing yogi (his energy body) with which he controls the entire occult/religious event remain stable and keep strictly and without deviation to the tantric method (*upaya*). Then, it says in the time doctrine, “no form of religion from the way of one’s own or a foreign people is corrupting for the yogis” (Grünwedel, *Kalacakra II*, p. 177). With this permission, the way is free for one to externally appear tolerant and open minded towards any religious direction without conflicting with the power-political goals of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala myth* that want to elevate Buddhism to be the sole world religion. In contrast, the feigned “religious tolerance” becomes a powerful means of surreptitiously promoting one’s own fundamentalism.

Where does this leave the ecumenical politics of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama? Interreligious discussions are one of the *Kundun's* specialties; there is not a major world ecumenical event of significance where his negotiating presence is not evident. He is one of the presidents of the “World’s Parliament of Religions” in Chicago. The god-king tirelessly spreads the happy message that despite differing philosophies all religions have the same motive, the perfection of humans. „Whatever the differences between religions,” he explained in Madras in 1985, „all of them want

man to be good. Love and compassion form the essence of any religion and these alone can bring people together and provide peace and happiness to humanity" (*Tibetan Review*, January 1985, p. 9).

Yet (he says) for the sake of quality one should not gloss over the differences between the religious approaches. It is not at all desirable that we end up with a uniform, overarching religion; that can not be the goal of the dialog. One should guard against a "religious cocktail". The variety of religions is a outright necessity for the evolution of humankind. "To form a new world religion," the *Kundun* says, "would be difficult and not particularly desirable. But since love is essential for all religions, one could speak of a universal religion of love. Yet with regard to the methods for developing love and for attaining salvation or permanent liberation the religions differ from one another ... The fact that there are so many different depictions of the way is enriching" (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 520). In general, everyone should stick with the religion he or she was born into.

For him it is a matter of deliberate cooperation whilst maintaining autonomy, a dialog about the humanity common to all. In 1997 the god-king proposed that groups of various religious denominations undertake a pilgrimage to the holy places of the world together in order to learn from one another. The religious leaders of the world ought to come together more often, as "such a meeting is a powerful message in the eyes of millions of people" (*Tibetan Review*, May 1997, p. 14).

### *Christianity*

In the meantime, exchange programs between Tibetan Buddhist and Christian orders of monks and nuns have become institutionalized through a resolution of the Dalai Lama, with all four major lines of tradition among the Tibetans (Nyingmapa, Sakyapa, Kagyupa, and Gelugpa) participating. In the sixties, the American Trappist monk and poet, Thomas Merton (1906-1968), visited the *Kundun* in Dharamsala and summarized his experience together as follows: "I dealt primarily with Buddhists ... It is of incalculable value to come into direct contact with people who have worked hard their whole lives at training their minds and liberating themselves from passions and illusions" (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 49).

In 1989 the god-king and the Benedictine abbot Thomas Keating led a gathering of several thousand Christians and Buddhists in a joint meditation in the West. The *Kundun* has visited Lourdes and Jerusalem in order to pray there in silent devotion. There is also very close contact between the Lutheran Church and the *Council for Religious and Cultural Affairs of H.H. the Dalai Lama*. At the so-called *Naropa Conferences* in Boulder, Colorado, topics such as "God" (Christian) and "Emptiness" (Buddhist), "Prayer" (Christian) and "Meditation" (Buddhist), "Theism" and "non-Theism", the "Trinity" and the "Three Body Theory" are treated in dialog between Christians and Buddhists.

The comparison between Christ and Buddha has a long tradition (see Brück and Lai, 1997, pp. 314ff.). There are in fact many parallels (the virgin birth for example, the messianism). But in particular *Mahayana* Buddhism's requirement of compassion allows the two founding figures to appear as representatives of the same spirit. *Avalokiteshvara*, the supreme Bodhisattva of compassion is thus often presented as a quasi-Christian archetype in Buddhism and also prayed to as such. This is naturally of great advantage to the *Kundun*, who is himself an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* and can via the comparison (of the two deities) lay claim to the powerful qualities of Christ's image.

But His Holiness is extremely cautious and diplomatic in such matters. For a Buddhist, the Dalai Lama says, Christ can of course be regarded as a Bodhisattva, yet one must avoid claiming Christ for Buddhism. (Incidentally, Christ is named in the *Kalachakra Tantra* as one the "heretics".) The *Kundun* knows only too well that an open integration of the archetype of Christ into his tantric pantheon would only lead to strong protests from the Christian side.

He must thus proceed with more skill if he wants to nonetheless integrate the Nazarene into his system as Padmasambhava once incorporated the local gods of Tibet. For example, he describes so many parallels between Christ and Buddha (*Avalokiteshvara*) that his (Christian!) audience arrive at the conclusion that Christ is a Bodhisattva completely of their own accord.

Just how successful the *Kundun* is with such manipulation is demonstrated by a conference held between a small circle of Christians and himself (in 1994), the proceedings of which are documented in the book, *The Good Heart: A Buddhist Perspective on the Teachings of Jesus*. In that the god-king repeatedly and emphatically stressed at this meeting that he had not the slightest intention of letting Buddhism monopolize anybody or anything, he in fact had the opposite effect. The more tolerant and respectful towards other religions he showed himself to be, the more he convinced his listeners that Buddhism was indeed the one true faith. With this Catch 22, the Dalai Lama succeeded in emerging at the end of this meeting as a Buddhist super monk, who in himself combined all the qualities of the three most important Christian monastic orders: „He [the Dalai Lama] brings three qualities to a spiritual discourse," the chief organizer of the small ecumenical event, a Benedictine, says, „traits so rare in some contemporary Christian circles as to have elicited grasps of relieved gratitude from the audience. These qualities are gentleness, clarity, and laughter. If there is something *Benedictine* about him, there is a *Franciscan* side as well and a touch of the *Jesuit*" (Dalai Lama XIV, 1997, pp. 16–17). The *Kundun* appeared to the predominantly Catholic participants at this interreligious meeting to be more Christian than the Christians in many points.

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Richard Gere: "Jesus is very much accepted by the Tibetans, even though they don't believe in an ultimate creator God. I was at a very moving event that His Holiness did in England where he lectured on Jesus at a Jesuit seminary. When he spoke the words of Jesus, all of us there who had grown up Christians and had often heard them before could

not believe their power. It was ...” Gere suddenly chokes with emotion. For a few moments he just stares into the makeup mirror, waiting to regain his composure. “When someone can fill such words with the depth meaning that they are intended to have, it’s like hearing them for the first time.” (Schell, 2000, p. 57)

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Although the Dalai Lama indignantly rejects any monopolization of other religions by Buddhism, this is not at all true of his followers. In recent times an ever-expanding esoteric literature has emerged in which the authors “prove” that Buddhism is the original source of all religions. In particular there are attempts to portray Christianity as a variant of the “great vehicle” (*Mahayana*). Christ is proclaimed as a Bodhisattva, an emanation of *Avalokiteshvara* who sacrificed himself out of compassion for all living creatures (e.g., Gruber and Kersten, 1994).

From the Tibetan point of view, the point of ecumenical meetings is not encounters between several religious orientations. [3] That would contradict the entire tantric ritual system. Rather, they are for the infiltration of foreign religions with the goal (like Padmasambhava) of ultimately incorporating them within its own system. On rare occasions the *methods* to be employed in such a policy of appropriation are discussed, albeit most subtly. Two conferences held in the USA in 1987 and 1992 addressed the central topic of whether the Buddhist concept of *upaya* (“adroit means”) could provide the instrument “for more relaxed dealings with the issue of truth in dialog (between Christians and Buddhists)” (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 281) “More relaxed dealings with the issue of truth” — that can only mean that the cultic mystery of the sexual magic rites, the warlike *Shambhala* ideology, and the “criminal history” of Lamaism is either not mentioned at all at such ecumenical meetings or is presented falsely.

An 800-page work by the two theologists Michael von Brück and Whalen Lai (*Buddhismus und Christentum* [Buddhism and Christianity]) is devoted to the topic of the encounter between Buddhism and Christianity. In it there is no mention at all of the utmost significance of *Vajrayana* in the Buddhist scene, as if this school did not even exist. We can read page after page of pious and unhurried *Mahayana* statements by Tibetan lamas, but there is all but nothing said of their secret tantric philosophy. The terms *Shambhala* and *Kalachakra Tantra* are not to be found in the index, although they form the basis for the policy on religions of the Dalai Lama whom the authors praise at great length as the real star of the ecumenical dialog. We can present this “theologically” highbrow book as evidence of the subtle and covert manipulation through which the “totalistic paradigm” of Tibetan Buddhism is to be anchored in the west.

Only at one single incriminating point, which we have already quoted earlier, do the two authors let the cat out of the bag. In it they recommend that American intellectuals who feel attracted to Chinese Hua-yen Buddhism should instead turn to the *Kundun* as the only figure in a position to be able to establish a Buddhocracy: “Yet Hua-yen is no longer a living tradition. ... That does not mean that a totalistic paradigm *could* not be repeated, but it seems more sensible to seek this in the *Tibetan-Buddhist tradition*, since the Tibetan Buddhists have a living memory of a real ‘Buddhocracy’ and a living Dalai Lama who leads the people as a religious *and* political head”

(Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 631). The authors thus believe, despite pages of feigned ecumenical Christianity, that a “totalistic paradigm” could be repeated in the future and recommend the god-king from Dharamsala as an example. They thus clearly and openly confirm the Buddhocratic vision of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala myth*, of which they themselves have not breathed a word.

The *Kundun* even seems to have succeeded in gaining access to the “immune” Judaism. After the Dalai Lama’s visit to Jerusalem (in 1996), groups were formed in Israel and the USA in which Jewish and Buddhist ideas were supposed to be brought together. A film has been made about the fate of the Israeli writer Rodger Kamenetz, who converted to Buddhism after he had visited the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala and then set about reinterpreting his own religious roots in Buddhist terms. The so-called *Bu-Jews* (Buddhist Jews) are the most recent product of the *Kundun*’s politics of tantric conquest. They are hardly likely to be aware of the interlinkage between Tantric Buddhism and occult fascism that we have described in detail.

### *Islam (The Mlecchas)*

In contrast Islam is proving more difficult for His Holiness than the Jews and Christians: “I can barely recall having a serious theological discussion with Mohammedans”, he said at the start of the eighties (Levenson, 1992, p. 288). This is only all too readily understandable in light of the apocalyptic battle between the *Mlecchas* (followers of Mohammed) and the Buddhist armies of the mythical general, *Rudra Chakrin*, prophesied in the *Shambhala myth*. A foretaste of this radical confrontation, which according to the *Kalachakra* prophecy awaits us in the year 2327, was to be detected as the Moslem Taliban in Afghanistan declared in 1997 that they would destroy the 2000-year-old statues of Buddha in Bamyān because Islam prohibited human icons. This could, however, be prevented under pressure from the world public who reacted strongly to the announcement. (We would like to mention in passing that the likenesses of Buddha carved into the cliffs of Bamyān, of which one figure is 60 yards high, are to be found in a region from which, in the opinion of reliable investigators like Helmut Hoffmann and John Ronald Newman, the *Kalachakra Tantra* originally comes.)

However, after being awarded the Nobel peace prize, the *Kundun* in his function as a world religious leader has revised his traditional reservation towards Islam. He knows that it is far more publicity-friendly if he also displays the greatest tolerance in this case. In 1998, he thus encouraged Indian Muslims to play a leading role in the discourse between the world religions. In the same, conciliatory frame of mind, in an interview he earlier expressed the wish to visit Mecca one day (Dalai Lama XIV, 1996b, p. 152). [4]

On the other hand however, His Holiness maintains very close contact with the Indian BJP (*Bhātiya Janata Party*) and the RSS (*Rashtriya Svayam Sevak Sangh*), two old-school conservative Hindu organizations (currently — in 1998 — members of the governing coalition) who proceed with all vigor against Islam. [5]

An honest renunciation of Tantric Buddhism's hostility toward Islam could only consist in the *Kundun*'s clear distantiation from all the passages from the *Kalachakra* tradition that concern this. To date, this has — as far as we know — never happened.

In contrast, already today there are radical developments in the Buddhist camp that are headed for a direct confrontation with Islam. For example, the Western Buddhist "lama", Ole Nydhal (a *Kagyupa*), is strongly and radically active in opposition to the immigration of Moslems to Europe.

As problematic as we perceive fundamentalist Islam to be, we are nonetheless not convinced that the *Kalachakra* ideology and the final battle with the *Mlecchas* (Mohammedans) prognosticated by the tantra can solve the conflict at the heart of the struggle between the cultures. A contribution to an internet-based discussion rightly described the idea of a *Shambhala* warrior as the Buddhist equivalent to the *jiḥād*, the Moslem "holy war". Religious wars, which have the goal of eliminating the respective non-believers, have in fact, and for the West unexpectedly, become a threat to world peace in recent years. We return to this point in our conclusion, especially the question of whether the division of humanity into two camps — Buddhist and Islam — as predicted in the *Kalachakra Tantra* is just a fiction or whether it is a real danger.

### *Shamanism*

Up until well into the eighties, the encounter with nature religions played a significant role for the *Dalai Lama*. There was at that stage a lot of literature that enthusiastically drew attention to the parallels between the North American culture of the Hopi Indians and Tibetan Buddhism. The same terminology was even discovered, just with the meanings reversed: for example, the Tibetan word for "sun" was said to mean "moon" in the language of the Hopi and vice versa, the Hopi sun corresponded to the Tibetan moon (Keegan, 1981, unnumbered). There are also said to be amazing correspondences among the rituals, especially the "fire ceremonies".

For a time the idea arose that the Dalai Lama was the messiah announced in the Hopi religion. In the legend this figure had been a member of the "sun clan" in the mythical past and had left his Indian brothers so as to return in the future as a redeemer. "They wanted to tell me about an old prophecy of their people passed on from generation to generation," His Holiness recounted, "in which one day someone would come from the east. ... They thought it could be me and had come to tell me this" (Levenson, 1992, p. 277).

In France in 1997 an unusual meeting took place. The spiritual representatives of various native peoples gathered there with the intention of founding a kind of international body of the "United

Traditions” and presenting a common “charta” to the public. By this the attendees understood a global cooperation between shamanistic religions, still practiced all over the world, with the aim of articulating common rights and gaining an influence over the world’s conscience as the “circle of elders”. The Dalai Lama was also invited to this congress, organized by a Lamaist monastery in France (*Karma Ling*). Just how adroitly the organizers made him the focal figure of the entire event, which was actually supposed to be a union of equals, is shown by the subtitle of the book subsequently published about the event, *The United Traditions: Shamans, Medicine Men and Wise Women around the Dalai Lama*. The whole scenario did in fact revolve around the Dalai Lama. Siberian shamans, North, South, and Central American medicine men (Apaches, Cheyenne, Mohawks, Shuars from the Amazon, and Aztecs), African voodoo priests (from Benin), Bon lamas, Australian Aborigines, and Japanese martial artists came together for an opening ceremony at a Vajrayana temple, surrounded “by the amazing beauty of the Tibetan décor” (Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 31). The meeting was suddenly interrupted by the cry, “His Holiness, His Holiness!” — intended for the Dalai Lama who was approaching the meeting place. The shamans stood up and went towards him. From this point on he was the absolute center of events. There were admittedly mild distantiations before this, but only the Bon priests dared to be openly critical. Their representative, Lopön Trinley Nyima Rinpoche, strongly attacked Lamaism as a repressive religion that has persecuted the Bon followers for centuries. In answer to a question about his attitude to Tibetan Buddhism he replied, “Seen historically, a merciless war has in fact long been conducted between us two. ... Between the 7th and the 20th century a good four fifths of Tibet was Buddhist. Sometimes this also meant violence: hence, in the 18th century, with the help of the Chinese, the Gelugpa carried out mass conversions in the border regions of Tibet which had long been inhabited by the Bon” (quoted by Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 141). Still today, the Bonpos are disadvantaged in many ways: “You should be aware, for instance, that non-Buddhist children do not see a penny of the money donated by international aid organizations for Tibetan children!” Nyima Rinpoche protested (quoted by Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 132).

But the Kundun knows how to deal with such matters. The next day he lets the Bon critic sit beside him, and declares the Bonpos to be “Tibet’s fifth school”. In his pride, Nyima Rinpoche forgot about any criticism or the history of the repression of his religion. The Dalai Lama takes the African voodoo representative, Daagpo Hounon Houna, in his arms and has a photo taken. The two book authors comment that, “Back home in Africa this picture will certainly receive great symbolic status” (Eersel and Grosley, 1998, p. 132). Then the Kundun says some moving words about “Mother Earth” he has learned from the New Age milieu and which as such do not exist in the Tibetan tradition: “These days we have too little contact to Mother Earth and in this we forget that we ourselves are a part of nature. We are children of nature, Mother Earth, and this planet is our only home” (quoted by Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 180). Let us recall that before the start of every *Kalachakra* ritual the earth spirits are nailed down with a ritual dagger. The Dalai Lama goes on to preach about the variety of races and the equality of the religions of the world. And he has already won the hearts of all. It is naturally *his* congress, he is the axis around which the “circle of elders” revolves.

Roughly in the middle of the book we suddenly learn that the delegates were invited in his name and that “without the support and the exceptional aura of His Holiness” nothing would have been possible (Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 253). Even the high priest from Benin, who smuggled the remains of an animal sacrifice into the ritual temple that was, however, discovered and removed,

accepts the Tibetan hierarch as the central figure of the meeting, saying "I therefore greet His Holiness the Dalai Lama around whom we have gathered here" (Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 199). One of the organizers (Jean-Claude Carrière) sums things up: "That was actually the motor of this meeting. Here for the first time peoples, some of whom have almost vanished from the face of the earth, were asked to speak (and act) and they have recognized the likewise degraded, disowned, and exiled Dalai Lama as one of their own. It is barely imaginable how important it was for them to be able to bow before him and present him with a gift" (Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 254). Tibetan Buddhism is becoming a catch-all for all religions: "If the meeting of the United Traditions took place in a Buddhist monastery, it is surely because the spirit of the Way of Buddha, as embodied by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, encourages such meetings. His presence alongside the elders and the role of unifier which was accorded him on the Day of the United Traditions, is in the same category as the suggestions that he made in front of the assembled Christians in 1994 ..." (Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 406). Thus Lamaism plays the tune to which those attending dance: "A more astonishing vision, in which we here, borne along by the songs and drums of the Tibetans, begin to 'rotate' along with the Asian shamans, African high priests, American and Australian men and women of knowledge" (Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 176).

This meeting made two things apparent: firstly, that the traditions of the native peoples are fundamentally uninterested in a process of criticism or self-criticism, and secondly, that here too the Dalai Lama assumes spiritual leadership as a "king shaman". A line from the joint closing prayer typifies the androcentric spirit of the "circle of elders": "God our Father, we sacrifice and dedicate to you our Mother the Earth" (Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 413). This says it all; even if a few women participate the council of elders remains a "circle of patriarchs", and the female sacrifice which we have identified as the central mystery of Tantric Buddhism also essentially determines the traditional systems of ritual of the shamans gathered in France.

### *The occult scene and the New Age*

What then is the relationship like between the Dalai Lama and the so-called esoteric scene, which has spread like a bomb all over the West in recent years? In relations with various traditional occult sects (the Moonies, Brahmakumaris, Scientologists, Theosophists, Roerich groups) who in general do not enjoy a good name in the official press His Holiness is often more tolerant and intimate than the broad public realizes. We have already reported extensively about his connection to Shoko Asahara's AUM sect. He also maintains lively contact with Theosophists of the most diverse schools. A few years ago His Holiness praised and introduced a collection of Madame Blavatsky's writings with a foreword.

But it is his relationship with the religious subculture that became known worldwide as the *New Age Movement* which is of decisive significance. Already at the start of the seventies the youth protest movement of 1968 was replaced by the spiritual practices of individuals and groups, the left-wing political utopia of a classless society by a vision of the "community of the holy". All the followers of the *New Age* saw themselves as members of a "soft conspiracy" that was to prepare for the "New Age of Aquarius" and the appearance of messianic saviors (often from non-European cultures). Every conceivable school of belief, politico-religious viewpoint and surreal fantasy was

gathered up in this dynamic and creative cultural current. At the outset the *New Age* movement displayed a naive but impressive independence of the existing religious traditions. It was believed one could select the *best* from all cultic mysteries — those of the Indians and American Indians, the Tibetans, Sufis, the Theosophists, etc. — in order to nonchalantly combine it with one's own spiritual experiences and further develop it in the sense of a spiritual and peaceful global community. Even traditionally based gurus from the early phase like Rajneesh Baghwan from India or the Tibetan, Chögyam Trungpa, were able to accept this “spiritual liberalism” and combined their hallowed initiation techniques with all manner of methods drawn from the modern western tradition, especially with those of therapeutic psychology. But after only a few years of creative freedom, the orthodox ecclesiastical orientations and atavistic sects who put this “mystic-original potential” to use for their own ends, indeed vitally needed it for their own regeneration, prevailed in the *New Age* movement.

Buddhism was intensively involved in this process (the incorporation of the *New Age*) from the outset. At first the influence of Japanese Zen predominated, however, two decades later Tibetan Lamaism succeeded in winning over ever more *New Age* protagonists. The fact that since the 19<sup>th</sup> century Tibet has been the object of western fantasies, onto which all conceivable occult desires and mystic hopes have been projected, certainly helped here. The Theosophic vision of omnipotent *Mahatmas* who steer the fate of the world from the heights of the Himalayas has developed into a powerful image for non-theosophical religious subcultures as well.

For the Fourteenth Dalai Lama the *New Age Movement* was both the primary recruiting field for western Buddhists and the gateway to mainstream society. The double character of his religion, this mixture of Buddhocratic officialese and the anarchistic drop-out that we have depicted earlier, was of great advantage to him in his skilled conquest of the spiritual subculture. Then the “children of the Age of Aquarius”, who conceived of themselves as rebels against the existing social norms (their anarchic side) and were not infrequently held up to ridicule by the bourgeois public, also on the other hand battled fiercely for social recognition and the assertion of their ideas as culturally acknowledged values. A visit by the Dalai Lama lent their events considerable official status, which they would not otherwise have had. They invested much money and effort to achieve this. Since the Dalai Lama was only very rarely received by state institutions before the late eighties but nonetheless saw extended travels as his political duty, the *material* resources of the *New Age* scene likewise played an important role for him. “He opens Buddhist centers for New Age *nouveau riche* protagonists”, wrote the *Spiegel*, “whose respectability he cannot always be convinced about” (*Spiegel* 16/1998, p. 111). Up until the mid eighties, it was small esoteric groups who invited him to visit various western countries and who paid the bills for his expenses afterwards — not the ministers and heads of state in Bonn, Madrid, Paris, Washington, London, and Vienna.

Such an arrangement suited the governments well, since they did not have to risk falling out with China by committing themselves to a visit by the Dalai Lama. On the other hand, the exotic/magic aura of the *Kundun*, the “living Buddha” and “god-king”, has always exercised a strong attraction over Society. Hardly anyone who had a name or status (whether in business, politics, the arts, or as nobility) could resist this charming and “human” arch-god. To be able to shake the hand of the “yellow pontiff” and “spiritual ruler from the roof of the world” and maybe even chat casually with

him has always been a unique social experience. Thus, on these somewhat marginalized *New Age* trips, time and again “secret” meetings took place “on the side “ with the most varied heads of state and also very famous artists (Herbert von Karajan for example), who let themselves be enchanted by the smile and the exoticism of the *Kundun*. Countless such unofficial meetings laid the groundwork for the *Kundun*’s Great Leap into the official political sphere, which he finally achieved at the end of the eighties with the *Tibet Lobby* and the award of the Nobel peace prize (1989).

Since then, it has been the heads of state, the famous stars, the higher ranks of the nobility, the rectors of the major universities, who receive the Tibetan *Kalachakra* master with much pomp and circumstance. The intriguing, original but naive *New Age Movement* no longer exists. It was rubbed out between the various religious traditions (especially Buddhism) on one side and the “bourgeois” press (the so-called “critical public”) on the other. For all the problems this spiritual heir and successor to the movements of 1968 had, it also possessed numerous ideas and life practices which were adequate for a spiritually based culture beyond that of the extant religious traditions. But the *bourgeois* society (from which the “Children of the Age of Aquarius came) had neither recognized nor acted upon this potential. In contrast, the traditional religions, but especially Buddhism, reacted to the *New Age* scene with great sensitivity. They had experienced the most dangerous crisis in their decline in the sixties and they needed the visions, the commitment, and the fresh blood of a young and dynamic generation in order to survive at all. Today the *New Age* is passé and the *Kundun* can distance himself ever further from his old friends and move over into the establishment completely.

In the following chapter we shall show just how decisive a role the *Kundun* played in the conservative process of resorption (of the *New Age*). He succeeded, in fact, in binding the intellectual and scientific elite of the *New Age Movement* to his own atavistic system. These were both young and elder western scientists trained in the classic disciplines (nuclear physics, chemistry, biology, neurobiology) who endeavored to combine their groundings in the natural sciences with religious and philosophical presentations of the subject, whereby the Eastern-influenced doctrines became increasingly important. This international circle of bold thinkers and researchers, who include such well-known individuals as Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, David Bohm, Francisco Varela, and Fritjof Capra, is our next topic. A further section of the *New Age* scene now serve as his dogsbodies through their commitment to the issue of Tibet, and are spiritual rewarded from time to time with visits from lamas and *retreats*.

### Modern science and Tantric Buddhism

In 1939 in a commentary on the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, the great psychologist Carl Gustav Jung wrote to the effect that to practice yoga on the 5th Avenue or anywhere else that could be reached by telephone would be a spiritual joke. Jung was convinced that the ancient yoga practices of Tibetan Tantrism was incompatible with the modern, scientifically and technologically determined, western world view. For him, the combination of a telephone and Tibet presented a paradox. “The telephone! Was there no place on earth where one could be protected from the curse”, a west European weary of civilization asks in another text, and promptly decides to journey

to Tibet, the Holy Land, in which one can still not be reached by phone (Riencourt, 1951, pp. 49-50). Yet such yearning western images of an untouched Tibet are deceptive. Just one year after Jung's statement (in 1940) the Potala had its own telephone line.

But there were also other voices in the thirties! Voices that dared to make bold comparisons between modern technical possibilities and the magic powers (*siddhis*) of Tantrism: Evans-Wentz, for example, the famous translator of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, enthuses about how "As from mighty broadcasting stations, the Great Ones broadcast over the earth that Vital Spirituality which alone makes human evolution possible" (Evans-Wentz, 1978, p. 18). These "Great Ones" are the *Maha Siddhas* ("Grand Sorcerers") who are in hiding in the Himalayas (in *Shambhala*) and can with their magic reach out and manipulate every human brain as they will.

In the last thirty years Tibetan Buddhism has built up a successful connection to the modern western age. From the side of the "atavistic" religion of Tibet there is no longer any fear of contact with the science and technology of the West. All the information technologies of the Occident are skillfully and abundantly employed by Tibetan monks in exile and their western followers. There are countless homepages preaching the *dharma* (the Buddhist teaching) on the internet. The international *jet set* includes lamas who fly around the globe visiting their spiritual centers all over the world.

But Tibetan Buddhism goes a step further: the monastic clergy does not just take on the scientific/technical achievements of the West, but attempts to render them epistemologically dependent on its Buddhocratic/tantric world view. Even, as we shall soon show, the *Kundun* is convinced that the modern natural sciences can be "Buddhized". This is much easier for the Buddhists than the Moslems for example, who are currently pursuing a similar strategy with western modernity. The doctrine of Mohammed is a revelatory religion and has been codified in a holy book, the *Koran*. The *Koran* is considered the absolute word of God and forms the immutable foundation of Islamic culture. It proves itself to be extremely cumbersome when attempts are made to subsume the European scientific disciplines within this revelatory text.

In contrast, Tibetan Buddhism (and also the *Kalachakra Tantra*) is based upon an abstract philosophy of "emptiness" which as the most general of principles can "include" *everything*, even western culture. "*Everything* arises out of *shunyata* (the emptiness)!" — with this fundamental statement, which we still have to discuss, the Lamaist philosophical elite gains access to the current *paradigm discussion* which has had European science holding its breath since Heisenberg's contribution to quantum theory. What does this all mean?

„Paradigms gain their status," Thomas Kuhn writes in his classic work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, „because they are more successful than their competitors in solving a few problems that the group of practitioners has come to recognize as acute." (Kuhn, 1962, p. 23). In his

statement, Kuhn takes a *scientific* paradigm dispute (between “theories”) as his starting point, but at the same time opens the door for *articles of faith*, since in his investigation a paradigm does not need to *explain* all its assumptions. In very general terms, we can thus understand the basic foundations of a human culture, be they of a scientific or a religious nature, as a paradigm. The dogma as to whether it is a god or a goddess who stands at the beginning of creation is thus just as much a paradigm as René Descartes’ assumption of the separation of the thinking mind (*res cogitans*) from extended matter (*res extensa*), or the principle of natural causation of Newtonian physics. Just like the believers in the tantric *Shambhala myth*, traditional Christians who accept the doctrinal status of the Apocalypse of St. John interpret human history according to an *eschatological, intentional* paradigm. In both systems, all historical events are directed towards a final goal, namely the coming of a messiah (*Christ* or *Rudra Chakrin*) and the staging of a final battle between believers and unbelievers. The future of humanity is thus fixed for all time. In contrast, western historicism sees history purely as the interplay of various causes that together produce an open-ended, undecided future. It thus follows a *causal* paradigm. A democracy holds the principle of the freedom and equality of all people as its guiding paradigm, whereas a theocracy or Buddhocracy recognize the omnipotence of a god or, respectively, Buddha as the highest principle of their system of governance.

New paradigms first come to the fore in a society’s cultural awareness when the old dominant paradigmatic fundamentals come into crisis. The western world is currently being shaken by such a paradigmatic crisis. According to contemporary critics, the scientific “Age of Reason” in alignment with the ideas of René Descartes and Isaac Newton is no longer able to cope with the multiplex demands of a postmodern society. Neither is the mechanistic world view with the causal principle of classical physics sufficient to apprehend the complexity of the universe, nor does western “rationalism” help *meaningfully* organize human and natural life. “Reason” for instance, as the undisputed higher principle reigned over the emotions, intuition, vision, religiousness, erotic love, indeed even over humanism. The result has been a fundamental crisis of meaning and epistemology. Citing Oswald Spengler, some commentators talk of the *Fall of the West*.

Hence proposals for the new, “postmodern” paradigms of the third millennium have been discussed everywhere in recent years at conferences and symposia (not least in *New Age* circles). For example, rather than trying to explain nature through linear-causal models, as in Newtonian physics, one can consider holistic, synchronic, synergetic, ecological, cybernetic, or micro/macroc cosmic structures.

Such new models revolutionize perception and thought and are easier to name than to put into socially integrated practice. For a paradigm shapes *reality* as such to conform with its foundations, it “objectifies” it, so to speak, in its image; in other words (albeit only after it has been culturally accepted) it creates the “objective world of appearances”, that is, people perceive *reality* through the paradigmatic filter of their own culture. A paradigm shift is thus experienced by the traditional elements of a society as a kind of loss of reality.

For this reason, as the foundations of a culture paradigms are not so easily shaken. In order to abandon the “outdated” Newtonian world view of classical physics, for example, the reality-generating bases of its thinking (above all the causal principle) would have to be relativized. But this — as Kuhn has convincingly argued — does not necessarily require that the new (postmodern, post-Newtonian) paradigm deliver an updated and more convincing scientific proof or a *rational* explanation, rather, it is sufficient for the new world view to *appear* better in total than the old one. To put it bluntly, this means that it is the *most powerful* and not necessarily the *most reasonable* paradigm that after its cultural establishment becomes the *best* and is thus accepted as the basis of a new culture.

Hence every paradigm change is always preceded by a deadly power struggle between various world views. Deadly because once established, the victorious paradigm completely disables its opponents, i.e., denies them any paradigmatic (or reality-explaining) significance. Ptolemy’s cosmological paradigm (“the sun rotates around the earth”) no longer has, after Copernicus (“the earth orbits the sun”), any reality-generating meaning. Thus, in the Copernican era the Ptolemaic views are at best considered to still be imaginary truths but are no longer capable of explaining *reality*. To take another example — for a Tibetan lama, what a positivist scientist refers to as reality is purely illusory (*samsara*), whilst the other way around, the religious world of the lama is a fantastic, if not outright pathological illusion for the scientist.

The crisis of western modernity (the rational age) and the occidental discussions about a paradigm shift primarily have nothing to do with Buddhism, they are a cultural event that arose at the beginning of the twentieth century in scientific circles in Europe and North America and a result of the critical self-reflection of western science itself. It was primarily prominent representatives from nuclear physics who were involved in this process. (We shall return to this point shortly.) Atavistic religious systems with their questionable wisdoms are now pouring into the “empty” and “paradigmless” space created by the self-doubt and the “loss of meaning “ of the modern western age, so as to offer themselves as new paradigms and prevail. In recent decades they have been offering their dogmas (which were abandoned during the Enlightenment or “age of reason”) with an unprecedented carefree freshness and freedom, albeit often in a new, contemporary packaging.

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama is just one of many (coming from the East) who present themselves and their spiritual meaning to the West as its savior in great need, but he is particularly adroit at this. Of course, neither the sexual magic doctrines of the *Kalachakra Tantra* nor the military ideology of the *Shambhala myth* are to be found in his *public* teachings (about the new paradigm), just the epistemological discourse of the two most important Buddhist philosophical schools (*Madhyamika* and *Yogachara*) and the compassionate, touching ethic of *Mahayana* Buddhism.

One must, however, admit without reservation that the Buddhist epistemological doctrine makes its entry into the western paradigm discussion especially easy. No matter which school, they all assume that an object is only manifest with the *perception* of the object. Objectivity (*reality*) and

subjective perception are thus inseparable, they are in the final instance identical. This radical subjectivism necessarily leads to the philosophical premise that all appearances in the exterior world have no “inherent existence” but are either produced by an awareness (in the *Yogachara* school) or have to be described as “empty” (as in the *Madhyamika* school).

We are dealing here with two epistemological schools of opinion which are also not unknown in the West. The Buddhist *Madhyamika* philosophy, which assumes the “emptiness” (*shunyata*) of all being, could thus win for itself a substantial voice in the Euro-American philosophical debate. For example, the thesis of the modern logician, Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), that all talk of “God” and the “emptiness” is nothing more than “word play”, has been compared with the radical statement of the *Madhyamika* scholar, Nagarjuna (2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century), that intellectual discourse is a “word play in diversity” (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 443). [6]

Further, the *Yogachara* school (“everything is awareness”) is presented as a Buddhist witness for the “quantum theory” of Werner Heisenberg (1901-1976). The German nuclear physicist introduced the dependence of “objective” physical processes upon the status of an (observing) subject into the scientific epistemological debate. Depending upon the experimental arrangement, for example, the same physical process can be seen as the movement of non-material waves or as the motion of subatomic particles (*uncertainty principle*). Occult schools of all manner of orientations welcomed Heisenberg’s *uncertainty principle* as a confirmation of their proposed spiritualization (subjectification) of all being and celebrated his observations as a “scientific” confirmation of their “just spirit” theories. (“Reality is dependent on the observing subject”).

Even the Fourteenth Dalai Lama speaks *nonchalantly* about Heisenberg’s theory and the subjectivity of atomic worlds: „Thus certain phenomena in physics”, we hear from the man himself, „are sometimes described as electromagnetic waves and on other occasions as particles. The description of the phenomenon thus seems to be very dependent upon the describer. Thus, in science we also find this concrete relationship to spirit, to the observing spirit which attempts to describe the phenomenon. Buddhism is very rich regarding the description of the spirit ... „ (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995, p. 52).

Surprisingly, such epistemological statements by the *Kundun*, which have in the meantime been taken up by every esoteric, are taken seriously in scientific circles. Even eminent authorities in their subject like the German particle physicist and philosopher Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker who was one of the leading *theoretical* founding fathers of the atomic bomb are enthusiastic about the self-assurance with which the god-king from Tibet chats about topics in quantum theory, and come to a far-reaching conclusion: „I [von Weizsäcker] therefore believe that modern physics is in fact compatible with Buddhism, to a higher degree than one may have earlier imagined” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995, 11).

On the other hand, in a charming return gesture the *Kundun* describes himself as the „pupil of Professor von Weizsäcker. ... I myself regard ... him as my teacher, my guru” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995, p. 13), and at another point adds, “The fact is that the concepts of atoms and elementary particles is nothing new for Buddhism. Since the earliest times our texts speak of these and mention even more subtle particles. ... After numerous conversations with various researchers I have realized that there is an almost total correspondence between that which I from a Buddhist standpoint refer to as the subtle insubstantiality of material phenomena, and that which the physicists express in terms of constant flux and levels of fluctuation” (Levenson, 1992, pp. 246-247). In the cosmogony of the *Kalachakra Tantra* there is talk of “space particles” that contain the core of a new world after the destruction of a universe. One could see a parallel to the atomic structure of matter here.

It is somewhat bold of the Dalai Lama to describe a passage from the *Kalachakra Tantra*, where one can read that after the fiery downfall of the Buddhist universe “galactic seeds” remain, as an anticipation of western nuclear science. This would imply that centuries ago Buddhism had formulated what is now said by the elite of western science. The atomic theory of the Greek philosopher Democritus (around 460–370 B.C.E.), who lived 1500 years before the *Kalachakra Tantra* was written, has much more right to this status. At any rate such retrospective statements by the *Kundun* have the job of presenting his own (Buddhist) system as earlier, superior and more comprehensive than western culture. They are made with the power-political intention of anchoring the atavistic *Kalachakra* doctrine (the textbook for his tantric conquest of the world) as the paradigm for the new millennium.

The issue with such outwardly harmless conclusions by the *Kundun* (“The *Kalachakra Tantra* already knew about particle physics”) is that they are thus part of a sublime power strategy on a spiritual level, not necessarily whether or not they are true. (We recall once more Kuhn’s thesis that a paradigm need not be rationally proven, but rather solely that it must have the power to prevail over its opponents).

And the Dalai Lama has success with his statements! It surprises ones afresh every time with what self-assurance he and his lamas intervene in the current crisis in western thought with their epistemological models and ethical (*Mahayana*) principles and know how to sell all this as originality. In this way the great Tibetan scholars of past centuries are evaluated by the Dalai Lama’s American “mouthpiece”, Robert Thurman, as more important and wide-reaching than their European “colleagues”. They were “Hero Scientists: they have been the quintessential scientists of that non materialistic civilization [of Tibet]” (quoted by Lopez, 1998, p. 81). As “psychonauts”, in contrast to the western “astronauts”, they conquered inner space (quoted by Lopez, 1998, p. 81). But the “guiding lights” of modern European philosophy like Hume and Kant, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, Hegel and Heidegger — Thurman goes on to speculate — will prove in a later age to have been the line holders and emanations of the Bodhisattva of science, Manjushri (Lopez 1998, p. 264). *Ex oriente lux* is now also true for the science of the occident.

In this, it is all too often overlooked from a western side that alongside the dominant materialist and mechanistic world view (of Newton and Descartes) there is an accompanying and unbroken *metaphysical* tradition in Europe which has been constantly further developed, as in German Idealism with all its variations. The classic *European* question of whether our world consists of mind and subjectivity rather than of matter and extended bodies has today been skillfully linked by Eastern-oriented philosophers to the question of whether the world conforms to the Buddhist epistemological paradigm or not.

The paradigmatic power struggle of the lamas is not visible from the outside but is rather disguised as interdisciplinary dialog, as in the annual “Mind and Life” symposia, in which the Dalai Lama participates with well-known western scientists. But is this really a matter of, as is constantly claimed, a “fruitful conversation” between Buddhism and contemporary science? Can Tibetan culture really, as is claimed in the *Tibetan Review*, offer answers to the questions of “western epistemologists, neurologists, physicists, psychoanalysts and other scientists”? (*Tibetan Review*, August 1990, p. 10).

We are prepared to undeservedly claim that a “rational” and “honest” discourse between the two cultures does not nor ever has taken place, since in such encounters the magic, the sexual magic practices, the mythology (of the gods), the history, the cosmology, and the political “theology” of Buddhist Tantrism remain completely omitted as topics. But together they all constitute the reality of Tibetan culture, far more than the epistemological theories of *Yogachara* or the *Madhyamika* philosophy, or the constant professions of love of *Mahayana* Buddhism do. That which awaits humanity if it were to adopt the paradigm of *Vajrayana*, would be the gods and demons of the Tibetan pantheon and eschatology and cosmogony laid out in the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala myth*.

### **Buddhist cosmogony and the postmodern world view**

In every paradigmatic conflict, the determination of a cosmogony has pride of place. What does our world look like, is it round or quadratic, a disc or a sphere, a center or part of the periphery, is it the result of a big bang or the seven-day work of a demiurge? The Orientalist John Wenterbury from Princeton fears for example that Islamic fundamentalism could lead to a “new age of *flat earthism*”. By “flat earthism” he means that the people from the Moslem cultures will start to believe again that the Earth is a disc (as the *Koran* teaches) and that every dissident opinion will be condemned as heresy. Should the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the Buddhist cosmology of *Abhidharma* associated with it become firmly paradigmatically established, we face something similar: a universe with Mount Meru in the middle, surrounded by the twelve continents and the planets orbiting it.

Such a model of the world contradicts the scientific discoveries of the West far more than the Ptolemaic system supplanted by Nicholas Copernicus, in which the sun circles the Earth. But how does His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama react to the incompatibility of the two world systems

(the Buddhist and the western one)? He appears in this case to be prepared to make a revision of the tantric cosmology. Also with the justification that everything arises from the emptiness, we may read that „I feel that it is totally compatible with the basic attitude of Buddhism to refute the literal interpretation of *Abhidharma* that says the earth is flat, because it is incompatible with the direct experience of the world as being round.” (Hayward, 1992, p. 37)

This statement is, however, in stark contradiction to the doctrine of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, the entire cosmogonic design of which is aligned with the *Abhidharma* model. Yet more — since the microcosmic bodily structure of the tantra master simulates the macrocosmic world with Mount Meru at its center and the surrounding continents and oceans, a change in the tantric cosmology means that the mystic body of the Dalai Lama (as the supreme *Kalachakra* master) must also be transformed. This is simply inconceivable, since our modern cosmology rejects any anthropomorphic form of outer space! Also, with a fundamental rejection of the *Abhidharma*, the whole *Kalachakra* system would lose its sense as the synchronic connection between the yogi's body and the cosmic events of Buddhist “evolution”. Consequently, up until now all the schools of Tibetan Buddhism have stuck strictly to the traditional cosmogony (and its correspondence in the mystic body). Besides the *sand mandala* of the Time Tantra (which also represents the Buddhist universe) Tibetan monks far more frequently construct the so-called *Meru mandala*. This, as its name suggests, is a likeness of the Buddhist cosmos in miniature with the world mountain Meru as its central axis.

When the Dalai Lama, who institutes no fundamental changes in the ritual system of Tantric Buddhism, says in public that the cosmology of the *Abhidharma* is in need of revision, then this definitely does not seem to be intended sincerely. More likely one must be prepared for his radical subjectivist epistemology (“everything is awareness, everything arises from emptiness”) to suspend the natural scientific world as illusion (*samsara*) at any moment and replace it with the fantastic model of the world from the *Abhidharma* which it is capable of making appear sensible and “rational”. From a tantric point of view, cosmogonies do not possess any objectivity of their own, rather they are ultimately the result of subjective conceptions; this is of course also true of the Copernican system. Kalu Rinpoche, the Kagyu master of the *Kalachakra Tantra* whom we have already often cited, has clearly expressed this dependency of space upon an appropriate awareness in the following words: “Each of these cosmologies is perfect for the being whose karmic projections lead them to experience their universe in this way. There is a certain relativity in the way in which one experiences the world. ... Hence, on a relative level every cosmology is valid. At an ultimate level, no cosmology is absolutely true. It cannot be universally valid as long as there are beings in fundamentally differing situations” (Brauen, 1992, p. 109). But that also means that the cosmology of the *Abhidharma* would become obligatory for all should the world be converted to Buddhism after the final *Shambhala* battle as the *Kalachakra Tantra* predicts.

### [The yogi as computer](#)

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama is especially interested in the phenomenon of artificial intelligence. Since the mind is independent of the body in the Buddhist teachings, a pattern of spiritual synapses so to speak, he is of the opinion that it is possible for it to be reborn not just in people

but also in machines: „I can't totally rule out the possibility that," the god-king says, „that all the external conditions and the karmic action were there, a stream of consciousness might actually enter into a computer. [...] There is a possibility that a scientist who is very much involved his whole life [with computers], than the next life [he would be reborn in a computer], same process! [laughter] Then this machine which is half-human and half-machine has been reincarnated." (Hayward, 1992, p. 152) (Hayward, 1992, p. 152). In answer to a subsequent question by Eleanor Rosch, a well-known cognitive psychologist from California, as to whether a great yogi who stood before the best computer in the world would be able to project his subtle consciousness into it, His Holiness replied enigmatically: „I feel this question about computers will be resolved only by time. We just have to wait and see until it actually happens." (Hayward, 1992, p. 153).

His Holiness casually grounds the possibility of taking the computer as a model for the spirit through a reference to an ancient magical practice of Tibetan Buddhism. This is known as *Trongjug* and involves a yogi transplanting his consciousness into a "freshly" deceased cadaver and then using this reanimated corpse for his own purposes (Evans-Wentz, 1937, p. 184). „In this case", His Holiness says, „there is a total change of the body. [...] It's very mystical, but imagine a person, a Tantric practitioner who actually transfers his consciousness to a fresh corpse. His previous body is dead; it has left and is finished. Now he has entered the new body. So in this case, you see, he has a completely new body but it's the same life, the same person" (Hayward, 1992, p. 155). Images of this kind can be translated into computer terms without further ado: The "fresh corpse" forms the *hardware* so to speak, which stores the awareness of the Tantric who uses the dead body for his own ends as *software*.

In addition, such Tantric Buddhist speculations can lead one to perceive a subjectivity independent of humans in the "Internet" and "cyberspace", a kind of superconscious. Could not the spirit of the supreme *Kalachakra* master, independent of a human body, one day control the international network of all computers from the inside? As fantastic and uncanny as it may sound, it is at any rate a *theoretical* possibility within the tantric system that such a question be answered with a yes. For this reason it is also taken seriously in exile Tibetan lama circles, by the Namgyal institute for example. The Namgyal monks are essentially commissioned to conduct the *Kalachakra Tantra* and are under the direct authority of the Dalai Lama. This institution can also be described as a kind of Tantric Buddhist "elite university".

On February 8, 1996, His Holiness's tantra institute posted a "Curriculum on Cyberspace" online. This document is of interest in as far as it is about the occult relationship between Tantrism, especially the *Kalachakra Tantra*, and the Internet. We would therefore like to cite several lengthier passages from it: "Cyberspace is a dimension of space sustained by networked computers designed to extend the power of the mind. Remarkably, the Internet often appears almost mystically to have a life of its own that is more than the sum of its parts. Mental projections can of course yield both positive and negative uses and results. Tibetan Buddhism, known for its mastery of the mind, has an area of concentration called 'tantra' that specializes in bringing spiritual motivation to the realm of mental projections ..." (Namgyal, HPI 012). From this, the authors continue, follows the need to have a Buddhist influence upon the net, to bless it and purify it.

The document continues as follows: the monks of the Namgyal Institute, “the personal monastery of the Dalai Lama, [were asked] to discuss whether the blessing of cyberspace would be possible. They enthusiastically responded, noting that one tantric system in particular, the *Kalachakra Tantra*, ... would be highly appropriate as a blessing vehicle because it especially emphasizes space ... Coincidentally, the *Kalachakra* is also the most widely disseminated of the Tibetan Buddhist tantric systems...” (Namgyal, HPI 012). Cyberspace, we also learn, could be used as the vehicle for a tantric projection (i.e., of the *Kalachakra Tantra*).

Thus the Namgyal Institute conducted the first *Kalachakra* cyberspace blessing with a ritual on February 8, 1996: “The actual ceremony took about 30 minutes and consisted of the monks chanting blessing prayers from the *Kalachakra Tantra* while envisioning space as cyberspace, the networked realm of computers, in their imagination. An image of the *Kalachakra* mandala, actually a scanned photo of a sand painting made earlier by the monks, was present on a computer as a visual aid ... Future cyberspace blessings will likely be offered at other auspicious times ...” (Namgyal, HPI 012). It should be obvious that the monks’ prayers contained the constantly recited *Mahayana* wish to help all living beings. The vision of a global Buddhocracy discussed in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, however, is not openly mentioned. [7]

There is something both fascinating and frightening about Buddhist theoreticians and even the Dalai Lama depicting Tantrism as the potential awareness of a world-spanning megacomputer. In this an identity of the ADI BUDDHA as a global superbrain is implicit. Does it perhaps have something to do with this Buddhist vision that His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama made himself available for an advertisement by the computer manufacturer, Apple? (*Spiegel*, 16/1998). [8]

In reading the literature about the structures of consciousness and their relation to computer technology, it is notable that “tantra” and “net” are frequently compared with one another, not just because the Sanskrit word “tantra” can be translated as “something woven” or “network”, but because the two systems are somehow presumed to be fundamentally related. Surprisingly even such a complex thinker as the astrophysicist and systems theorist Erich Jantsch —probably out of ignorance of the matter — has (in the late seventies) equated the principle of “cybernetic leaning processes” with Tantrism (Jantsch, 1982, p. 324).

In October 1987, a small group of well-known Western scientists headed by Francisco Varela traveled to Dharamsala to take part in a several-day seminar on neurobiology, cognitive psychology, artificial intelligence, and evolutionary theory with the Dalai Lama. There were daily meetings with an expert paper and subsequent discussion. The intention behind the whole event was however ultimately directed at just one question — how could the latest discoveries in the most advanced branches of scientific research be derived from Buddhism? After every expert paper one heard, yes, Buddhism already says that too! Admittedly, His Holiness spoke

emotionally about a “combination of Western science and Eastern spiritual development”, but at heart it was not about cooperation, but rather the consolidation of the Buddhist paradigm described about. In the meantime such meetings between His Holiness and Western scientists have become institutionalized by Dharamsala and take place annually “Mind and Life”).

Many researchers from the West, starved of mystic experiences for decades, have finally found their spiritual master in the “living Buddha” from Dharamsala. They have become converts to Buddhism like Francisco Varela or the nuclear physicist David Bohm, or, like Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, they fall into a kind of private ecstasy when confronted with the *Kundun*. Although His Holiness’s “scientific” interventions remain very general and abstract and in fact repeatedly boil down to just a handful of epistemological statements, he is nonetheless treated as a “colleague” by a number of scientists, behind whom the omniscience of a yogi shines forth. „Well, as has often been the case in this conference,” Francisco Varela enthuses for example, „Your Holiness, seem to anticipate the scientists’ questions” (Hayward, 1992, p. 230).

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**Neuroscientists**                      **see**                      **red**                      **over**                      **Dalai**                      **Lama**  
[www.nature.com/news/2005/050725/full/436452b.html](http://www.nature.com/news/2005/050725/full/436452b.html)

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Whoever it is who can formulate and consolidate the “scientific” paradigms of an era in human history actually ought to be regarded as the “spiritual ruler” of the era; he represents the force which determines the awareness, the feelings and the thoughts of millions for centuries. Ptolemy, Copernicus, Descartes, Newton, Marx, Freud, and Einstein were such “spiritual giants”. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, a brilliant master of the workings of consciousness, knows full well about this historical force and the power-political significance of the paradigmatic conflict. Likewise, he knows that a “Buddhization” of western science would make him especially powerful in contrast to other religious orientations. The Buddhist epistemological theories furnish the ideal conditions for such a process of appropriation. Both the *Yogachara* school (“everything is awareness”) and the *Madhyamika* school (“everything arises from emptiness”) permit (at least in theory) a relativization of the scientific culture of the West and its replacement with the world view of the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

As subtly, philosophically, and rationally as the tantric world view is discussed among the Western scientific elite, the more spectacular, emotional, and mythical is the spread of Tantric Buddhism among the masses. The *Kundun* has in the last five years succeeded in engaging the greatest propaganda machine in the world, the Hollywood film industry, for himself and his cause.

## **Hollywood and Tantric Buddhism**

The exotic flair projected by the Tibetan god-king and his lamas with their mysterious doctrine and adventurous history has led to a situation in which Tibet and its religion have increasingly become the stuff celluloid dreams are made of. First of all, the Italian film director, Bernardo Bertolucci, created a somewhat saccharine but highly regarded monument to the religious founder with his work, *Little Buddha*. The film provided great propaganda value for Tibetan Buddhism because it told the story of the reincarnation of a lama in an American boy and an Indian girl and thus paved the way for the spread of the doctrine in the West.

While we were writing this book two major films about His Holiness appeared. One of them, Martin Scorsese's *Kundun*, features the life story of the god-king from his discovery as a boy up until his flight from Tibet (in 1959), the other, *Seven Years in Tibet*, directed by Jean Jacques Arnaud, is about the adventures of the Austrian mentor of the Dalai Lama and SS member, Heinrich Harrer, with Brad Pitt in the lead role. "Tibet is the flavor of the season! ... In recent months around two million Germans have wanted to see the teenage idol Brad Pitt as the Austrian adventurer and Lama friend, Heinrich Harrer" the *Spiegel* enthused without once mentioning Harrer's SS past (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 110).

Whilst filming, Brad Pitt experienced something like a mystic shiver: "And then they shot this scene where they are saying: 'Give the Dalai Lama the power!' Everybody goes into this chant, and it was like something was going down and God was shining through the clouds. It was *heavy*" (*Newsweek*, May 19, 1997, p. 25).

The Italo-American Scorsese was with irresistible, ambiguous humor accepted as a monk by His Holiness. After the filmmaker had visited him in Dharamsala at the end of an exhausting journey, the *Kundun* bantered that, "Martin seemed at once far calmer. No longer like a hectic New Yorker, but like a Tibetan monk" (*Playboy* [German edition], March 1998, p. 40).

Scorsese himself is completely convinced that his film, *Kundun*, has a magic effect on its audience. "Kundun is reminiscent of a filmic prayer — as if you wanted to show what is invisible to the eye: spirituality. Can this succeed in the cinema?", asks the in spiritual matters otherwise extremely skeptical, even cynical German weekly magazine, *Spiegel*. "Absolutely", answered Scorsese, "If you put movements, rhythms, music, faces together in a particular way, then something like a *spiritual current* can arise from the totality of images" (*Spiegel* 12/1998, p. 261) This director has made a ritual film, which in his opinion can silently influence people's awareness (as Tibetan Buddhism would have it): "These rituals which I show in *Kundun*, for example, I don't need to explain. They are something wonderful and universal" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, March 14-15, 1998, p. 19).

However, in the USA the film was well received by neither the general public nor the critics. "The devastating reaction of the American mainstream press made me sick", the director said at the

presentation of his missionary work in Munich. (*Münchener Abendzeitung*, March 19). In total contrast to their American colleagues, numerous German film critics let themselves be completely uncritically drawn into the “spiritual current” of the *Kundun*. The *Bild* newspaper, for example, raved: “He recounts his tale almost wordlessly, in magic images. And slowly. So slowly that one soon surrenders to the pull of the images, forgets the passing of time and savors every moment” (*Bild*, March 19, 1998, p. 6). The *Münchener Abendzeitung* had this to say: “Scorsese’s film is *hypnotic* and *lucid*” (*Münchener Abendzeitung*, March 19). Even the “sober” German news magazine, *Spiegel*, had no reservations about letting itself be enchanted and spoke enthusiastically of the “impressive images” with which Scorsese created “the portrait of an exceptional person and a mystic dreamland [of] Shangri La — demanding, strongly emotional cinema” (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 110). German political and artistic celebrities were out in force at the lavish premiere of the film in Munich.

Scorsese’s film, the screenplay of which was edited by the Dalai Lama himself, is a work of exile Tibetan propaganda which falsifies or distorts recent Tibetan history in numerous scenes. There is no word of the CIA’s assistance in the flight of the *Kundun*; that his father was poisoned by political factions, that the former regent Reting Rinpoche was brutally strangled in the Potala, that at the time at least 200 monks from the Drepung monastery who wanted to free Reting Rinpoche from prison were killed by the machineguns of the Tibetan army — all these incidents either remained unmentioned or were falsely depicted. Mao Zedong appears as a decadent giant with the aura of a noble-born casino owner. Even in his own autobiography the *Kundun* writes that he much admired Mao, but in the film he encounters the “Great Chairman” with the constant, almost mistrustful attentiveness of a young, albeit still somewhat inexperienced, spiritual master.

Five further film about the *Land of Snows* were scheduled to appear in 1998/99: about the CIA in Tibet, the terrible yeti in Tibet, the terror in Tibet, a romantic love story in Tibet, the shattered dreams of youth in Tibet. IMAX, a company which produces gigantic 3D movies, has commissioned a film in which a Tibetan mountain-climber under dramatic circumstances unfurls the national flag of the Land of Snows at the highest point in the world (on Mount Everest). (We may recall that Mount Everest is worshipped by the populace as a goddess.) In addition to these feature films there are numerous documentaries, among others one about the “Bu-Jews”, or Jewish people who have decided to follow the Buddhist religious path. Denise Di Novi, whose production company has also conducted a “Tibet project” under the title of *Buddha of Brooklyn*, informs us that “The tale of the Dalai Lama and the struggle of the Tibetan people is the kind of story that captures the imagination of Hollywood” (*Newsweek*, May 19, 1997, p. 24). Tibet film scripts are piling up in the editorial offices of the big film companies. “It’s as though everybody who carries a camera wants to make a movie on Tibet”, Tenzing Chodak, director of the *Tibet Fund*, has commented (*Newsweek*, May 19, 1997, p. 24).

Undoubtedly the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has gained an particularly notable victory in his entry into the Hollywood scene. “Tibet is looming larger than ever on the show business map”, we could read in the *Herald Tribune* (*Herald Tribune*, March 20, 1997, p. 1). In August 1996, Harrison Ford, Sharon Stone, Steven Segal, Shirley MacLaine, and other superstars queued to shake hands with the “living Buddha” in Los Angeles. Barbara Streisand and Alec Baldwin called upon

President Bill Clinton to rebuke China for its human right abuses in Tibet. "Tibet is going to enter Western popular culture as something can only when Hollywood does the entertainment injection into the world system", writes the journalist Orville Shell, "Let's remember that Hollywood is the most powerful force in the world, besides the U.S. military" (*Herald Tribune*, March 20, 1997, p. 6). In 1993, 88 of the 100 most-viewed films were made in the USA. Orville Schell, who is working on a book about "Tibet and the West", sees the *Kundun*'s Hollywood connection as a substitute for the absent diplomatic corps who would be able to represent the interests of the Dalai Lama internationally: "Since he doesn't have embassies, and he has no political power, he has to seek other kinds. Hollywood is a kind of country in his own, and he's established a kind of embassy there" (*Newsweek*, May 19, 1997, p. 24).

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Orville Schell: "Undeniable, there was something of a craze brewing around Tibet. Like a radioactive core emitting uncontainable energy, Hollywood's sudden interest was helping to fuel what some observers started to call a *Tibet phenomenon*. Indeed, as the buzz about the film productions increased, media outlets of all kinds soon gravitated to the story, so that everywhere one looked the subject of Tibet had a way of popping up." (Schell, 2000, p. 34)

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The god-king primarily owes it to the actor Richard Gere that he has become a star for America's famous actors. "For the Tibetan people, Richard Gere, Hollywood, and the films are an absolute stroke of luck!", His Holiness explained in the German edition of *Playboy* (*Playboy* [German edition], March 1998, p. 38). Gere himself was initiated into the *Kalachakra Tantra* by the *Kundun*; we do not know to what level. He has spoken very openly about his initiation experiences in the journal *Tricycle* and also made reference there to the magic power of Tantrism, which drove him to the limits of his own existence (*Tricycle* 5 (3), p. 54). There is already a poem in which Gere is revered like a Tibetan deity: "The huge head of Richard Gere," it says in this poem, "a tsonga blossom in his hair, / comes floating like a Macy's Parade balloon / above the snowdapped summit of sacred Kailash" (*Time*, vol. 150 no. 15: October 13, 1997). The Dalai Lama, who is fully aware of the great significance of show business, has selected the Hollywood star as his personal pupil and treats him, the actor says, with fatherly severity.

His Holiness does not even shrink from using the world of fashion „to bring Tibet and Buddhism to the notice of the international jet" (*Tibet Review*, January 1993, p. 7). "Blatant materialism is passé, Lamaism *en vogue*!", the *Spiegel* tells us (*Spiegel* 16/1998, p. 109). In January 1993 the *Kundun* was responsible for an issue of the fashion magazine *Vogue* as *Exceptional Editor in Chief*. Fashion designers like Anna Sui, Todd Oldham, and Marc Jacobs sell outfits for "freedom in Tibet". As a "celebrity cook" the god-king recommends "a likely hit recipe for dumplings" (*Spiegel*, special issue, 4/1998, p. 133).

An interview with the *Kundun* that appeared in the March (1998) issue of the German edition of *Playboy* is a highpoint in his "public relations". The up-market sex magazine presents His Holiness in the introduction bombastically: "He is goodly, wise, and peaceloving — and is conquering the world [!]: The victory procession of the Dalai Lama leaves even the Pope pale with envy. The Tibetan leader is worshipped like a god in Hollywood at the moment. Now in *Playboy* he talks more openly than ever. About Buddhism, China, sex, and alcohol" (*Playboy* [German edition],

March 1998, p. 38). Even if a light ironic note is not to be overheard in this presentation, the statement is nonetheless unambiguous: The Dalai Lama is conquering the world (!) and is worshipped like a god in Hollywood, the mightiest center of the industry of the mind.

This *Playboy* interview has a further symbolic value, especially when we adopt the tantric/magic viewpoint that everything is interconnected. In this light there must be a reason why the pious statements and the photos of His Holiness are printed in the sex magazine together with numerous images of naked women and amid erotic and in places obscene texts. It immediately rouses up the image of a *ganachakra* with the central guru conducting his sexual magic rites surrounded by his *karma mudras* (wisdom consorts or *Playgirls*). When *Playboy* asks the supreme Tibetan tantra master, “Are you actually interested in the topic of sex?”, the *Kalachakra* master, initiated into all the secrets of sexual magic, replies, “My goodness! You ask a 62-year-old monk who has been celibate his entire life a thing like that. (*laughs out loud*) I don’t have much to say about sex...” (*Playboy* [German edition], March 1998, p. 46).

With equal euphoria and enthusiasm the German news magazine, *Spiegel*, devoted a cover story to the *Kundun* in April 1998. The front cover featured the head of a Buddha into which masses of Westerners were pouring. Was this the head of the Kundun, the incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* and the time god *Kalachakra*? The title story of this issue of *Spiegel* is at any rate to a large extent dedicated to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism, or rather to what the author (Erich Follath) understands this to be. It begins — coincidentally or not — on page 108, the holiest and most magical number in Tantric Buddhism. Follath probably asked the *Spiegel* editors to make the magic page number the start of his article deliberately, since he is well-informed about the holy number 108. In a travel report on Bhutan he mentions the numeral 108, and since this reference occurs in connection with an event that we have dealt with in detail in our study, we would like to quote the passage. “... half a dozen more lamas are keeping watch here in the Himalayan foothills at the place where the king, Songtsen Gampo, had the first of a total of 108 holy sites constructed in the 7<sup>th</sup> century: It was supposed to drive out the terrible devil in the form of a woman who at that time was up to her mischief all over the roof of the world, the residence of the gods” (*Spiegel*, special issue 4/1998, p. 60). The “terrible devil in the form of a woman” is no-one other than “Mother Tibet”, the stigmatized *Srinmo*, over whose body the sacred landscape of the Land of Snows is raised.

The Dalai Lama’s star is shining brighter than ever before. Nevertheless, since the *Shugden* rebellion the god-king’s aura has begun to darken, and it is an irony of fate that the serious accusations against him have come from a conservative faction within his own school (the Gelugpas). In addition, the followers of the recalcitrant protective god (*Shugden*) do not argue like “reactionaries” at all in public, but rather (just like the *Kundun*) appeal to democratic fundamentals, human rights, and the freedom of opinion. Thus in certain circles the “greatest prince of peace of our times” has overnight become a despot, a political traitor, a nepotist, a hypocrite, even a potential murderer. His accusers do not just abuse him, but rather justify their claims with “hard” facts that are worth checking but for which the “official” West has up until now closed its eyes and ears.

In the ongoing *Shugden* debate (as of 1998), many previously repressed and unreappraised topics from the history of Tibet and the Tibetans in exile have been brought to the surface. Among other things His Holiness and the government in exile have been accused of constantly defaming Tibetan Opposition figures as Chinese spies (e.g. Dujom Rinpoche) so as to silence them politically; of undemocratic actions against 13 Indian branches of Tibetans in exile and the possible murder of their spokesman, Gungthang Rinpoche; of playing false with the national guerilla army, which is outwardly combated, but covertly supported and built up; of the political murder of opposition politicians (Gongtang Tsultrim); of power-politically motivated jealousy of the Fifteenth Karmapa, the head of the largest Kagyupa lineage; of nepotism and the absolute favoritism of members of the Dalai Lama's family (the "Yabshi clan"); of misjudging the world political situation, especially in the years of delay in establishing good contacts with Taiwan; of cooperation with the Chinese over the enthronement of the new Karmapa; of secret diplomacy with Beijing in general, through which the country is sold out to China to the benefit of the Lamaist culture. Intrigues play just as major a role in Dharamsala ("little Lhasa") as in the Lhasa of old. The centuries of struggle between the various sects have also not reached an end in exile, and the competition between the individual regions of the Land of Snows just as little. Corruption and sinister money dealings are everyday events among the Tibetans. Fresh accusations are being made every day. In particular, as a spokesperson for the government in exile laments, the Internet is filled with "an unprecedented amount of literature ... that criticizes the Dalai Lama and belittles the Tibetan Exile Government" (Burns, Newsgroup 1).

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#### Footnotes:

[1] The inspiration for "engaged Buddhism" come not from the Dalai Lama but rather from Thich Nhat Hanh, a Theravada monk born in central Vietnam in 1926. The causes of ignorance, egocentrism, violence, war, and environmental degradation were supposed to be overcome through meditation, social commitment and the practice of community with Christian groups all over the world.

[2] This was in the period where the Communist Party (the SED) had already lost control over the country.

[3] Pope John Paul II is also more reserved than progressive on the ecumenical front, despite the spectacular major event with representatives from all religions that took place at his invitation in Assisi on October 25, 1986 and at which the *Kundun* was also present. Almost ten years after this meeting, upon which many followers of the ecumenical movement had set great hopes, the Pope describes the teaching of Buddha Shakyamuni in his book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* as atheistic, negative, and unworldly and states that the "doctrines of salvation in Buddhism and Christianity are opposed" (*Tibetan Review*, June 1995, p. 12).

[4] It will never come to this, since the Muslims are just as well-versed and sensitive as His Holiness in matters concerning occultism and “world domination”.

[5] Members of the RSS were closely involved in the murder of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948, of whom the Dalai Lama claims he was his greatest non-Buddhist teacher.

[6] With his *shunyata* doctrine, Nagarjuna, the founding father of *Madhyamika*, even gained admittance into the discourse of Christian theology, through Abe Masao’s concept of a “self-emptying, self-denying God”, for instance. (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 448).

[7] As an aside, it must be noted, however, that the blessing of the Internet by the *Kalachakra* monks has not had the positive effect they intended. In thousands of the contributions that have been transmitted over the net since 1996 the Dalai Lama has for the first time been subject to strong criticism and attack.

[8] Apple ran a campaign under the slogan *Think Different* that featured living and past celebrities — including (alongside Pablo Picasso, Mohammed Ali, Mahatma Gandhi, Alfred Hitchcock, etc.) the Dalai Lama. Since the god-king’s likeness drew criticism in Asian countries, Apple withdrew the ad. This in its turn led to a spirited discussion on the Internet.

## 17. CONCLUSION

We have now reached the end of our detailed treatise on the Dalai Lama, Tantric Buddhism, and Tibetan history. The first part of our study (*Ritual as Politics*) was centered on the theme of gender, especially the sexual magic exploitation of the woman in the androcentric system of *Vajrayana* for the mytho-political accumulation of power. The derivation of Tibetan history and the Dalai Lama's politics from the cultic mysteries of Buddhist Tantrism (especially the *Kalachakra Tantra*) forms the content of the second part of our book (*Politics as Ritual*). In general, we have attempted to show that, in the world view of the Lamaist, sacred sexuality, magic, mysticism, and myth are united with his understanding of politics and history.

Tibetan Buddhism primarily owes its success in the West to two facts: first, the charm and brilliant self-presentation of its supreme representative, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, and second, the promise to lead people on the way to enlightenment. Although the tantric path to enlightenment explicitly involves a dissolution of the ego, it is at first the *I* of the pupil which is addressed. "*I* would like to overcome the senselessness and suffering of my earthly existence. *I* would like to experience liberation from *samsara* (the world of illusion)." When a western *sadhaka* is prepared to sacrifice his "little self", he certainly does not have the same understanding as the lamas of the "greater self" (the higher self or Buddha consciousness) which the tantric philosophy and practices of *Vajrayana* offers him as a spiritual goal. The Westerners believe that enlightened consciousness still has something to do with a self. In contrast, a teacher of Tantric Buddhism knows that the individual identity of the pupil will be completely extinguished and replaced by a strictly codified, culturally anchored army of gods. It is the Tibetan Buddhas, herukas, Bodhisattvas, deities, demons (*dharmapalas*) and the representatives of the particular guru lineages who take the place of the individual pupil's consciousness. One must thus gain the impression that an "exclusive club" of supernatural, albeit culturally bounded, beings (Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, gods, etc.) has managed to survive by time and again occupying human bodies anew (until these wear out). Tibetan Buddhism is not aimed at the enlightenment of individuals but rather at the continuing existence of a culture of superhumans (yogis, gods) in the form of possessed people (the pupils). It is concerned here to perpetuate a priestly caste that does not need to die because their consciousnesses can be incarnated into the human bodies of their followers again and again. This caste and their deities are considered sacrosanct. They live beyond all criticism. Their symbols, deeds, and history are set up as exemplary; they are the cultural inheritance which may not be analyzed but must be taken on blind faith by believers.

For these reasons Tibetan Buddhism's entire promise of enlightenment forms a trap with which intimate and religious yearnings can be used to magically push through the politico-religious goals of the monastic clergy. (We are not discussing here whether this is really possible, rather, we are talking about the intentions of the Lamaist system.) This corresponds exactly with what the Renaissance philosopher Giordano Bruno describes as "manipulation". Bruno, it will be recalled, indicated that a masterly manipulator may not speak about his actual power-political intentions. In contrast, he flatters the ego of the one to be manipulated (the ego the masses), so that the latter always believes he is following solely his own interests and pursuing his completely personal

goals — but in truth he is fulfilling the wishes and targets of the manipulator (without knowing it). Applied to the Dalai Lama and his religion this means that people practice Tibetan Buddhism because they hope for enlightenment (liberation from personal suffering) from it, yet in reality they become agents of political Lamaism and the Tibetan gods at work behind it. The Dalai Lama is thus a particularly impressive example of a “manipulator” in Bruno’s sense.

If people are used to serve as vessels for the Tibetan gods, then the energy which directly powers the mysto-political motor of the Lamaist system consists in the sacred sexuality, the erotic love, particularly in the *gynergy* of the woman (as fuel). Tibetan Buddhism is a mystery religion and its mysteries are the driving force behind its political decisions. Reduced to a concise formula, this means that sexuality is transformed via mysticism into power. The French poet Charles Péguy is supposed to have said that, “every mysticism ends up as politics”. The dynamic of the tantric system cannot be better described. It is a large-scale “mystic ritual machine” whose sole aim is the production of the all-encompassing ADI BUDDHA and the establishment of his universal political control.

Just how closely intertwined Lamaism sees sexual magic and politics to be is demonstrated by the dual nature of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. The sexual magic rituals, the cosmology, and the political program of the *Shambhala myth* are tightly interwoven with each other in this document. For a Western reader, the text seems unintegrated, at odds with itself, and contradictory, but for a Buddhist Tantric it forms a seamless unity.

Tantric rituals are thus politics, as we have described in the first part of our study. But in reverse, politics is also a ritual, i.e., every political event, be it the flight of the Dalai Lama from Tibet, the vandalistic actions the Chinese Red Guard, the death of Mao Zedong, or a film like Scorsese’s *Kundun*, they all — from a traditional Tibetan and not from a Western point of view — form a performance along the *Kalachakra* master’s progress toward the throne of the ADI BUDDHA.

If we judge the *politics* of Lamaist Buddhocracy from a Western point of view, especially those of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala myth*, then we arrive at the following nine assessment points:

1. The *politics* of the Time Tantra is “inhuman”, because it is conducted by gods and yogis, but not by people. These gods possess in part extremely destructive characteristics. They are nonetheless sacrosanct and may neither be criticized nor exchanged or transformed.
2. The goal of this tantra is the establishment of an androcentric, undemocratic, despotic monastic state headed by an autocrat (the ADI BUDDHA).
3. The Buddhocratic state is structurally based upon sacrifice: the sacrifice of the loving goddess, the woman, the individual, the pupil, the king, the scapegoat.

4. Buddhocracy skillfully manipulates several models of *temporary anarchism* in order to in the end turn them around into an authoritarian system.
5. In a Tibetan-style Buddhocracy, the state and its organs do not shrink from using black magic rituals to get political opponents out of the way.
6. Buddhocratic politics are aligned not towards democratic decision-making processes but rather towards divine commands, especially the pronouncements of oracles, of whom *Pehar*, the pre-Buddhist war god of the Hor Mongols, assumes the leading role (of state oracle).
7. The tantric state is pursuing an aggressive policy of war and conquest (the Shambhalization of the world).
8. The *Shambhala myth* contains an apocalyptic vision borne by a “fascistoid” warrior ethos, in which the faithful (the Buddhists) brutally annihilate all non-believers (above all the Moslems).
9. Tantric Buddhism manipulates the western masses with falsified images of peace, ecology, democracy, a pro-woman orientation, social justice, and compassion.

In this connection we would like to (in warning) mention once more the significant influence that both Buddhist Tantrism in general and the *Kalachakra Tantra* and *Shambhala myth* in particular have had over fascism and German national socialism, and continue to exert. In chapter 12 we reported on Heinrich Himmler’s occult interest in Tibet, about the former SS member Heinrich Harrer, the tutor of the young Dalai Lama, and about the significance of *Vajrayana* for the fascist ideology of Mussolini’s confidante, Julius Evola. But at the center of this chapter stood a detailed analysis of *Esoteric Hitlerism*, the world view of the Chilean diplomat and author Miguel Serrano who closely follows Buddhist Tantrism and combines it with occult doctrines of the Nazis. Most clearly of all, Serrano shows what awaits humanity if the *Kalachakra Tantra* were to gain control over the world: a racist autocracy of androgynous warriors who celebrate real female sacrifices as their supreme mystery and worship Hitler’s SS as their historical role-model. In warning, we would indicate that it is not a *coincidence* that His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has maintained contact with these fanatic worshippers of the SS and the German “Führer” since his flight from Tibet (in 1959), but rather because his tantric tradition corresponds with many of their ideological and visionary aspects.

Where Serrano’s *Shambhala visions* have up until now remained speculations, they have taken on a horrifying reality in the figure of the Japanese sect leader, Shoko Asahara. The world held its breath in the case of Asahara as he ordered the carrying out of a gas attack on Tokyo’s overfilled underground railway system in 1995 in which there were numerous injuries and several people died. It was the first militarily planned attempted murder by a religious group from an industrialized country which was directed outwardly (i.e. not against its own membership). The immense danger of such insidious attacks, against which the masses are completely unprotected, is obvious. For all the depth of feeling which the act stirred up among the international public, no-one has until now made the effort of investigating the ideological and religious bases and motives which led Asahara to commit his crime. Here too, the ways lead to Tibetan Buddhism, especially the *Shambhala myth* of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Asahara saw himself as an incarnation of the *Rudra Chakrin*, the raging wheel turner, who destroys one half of the world in order to (literally) rescue the other half through his *Shambhalization plan*. Not only was did he practice *Vajrayana*, he was also a “good friend” of the Dalai Lama, whom he met five times in person.

## The atavistic pattern of Tibetan Buddhism

Despite all these problematic points, the image of Tibetan Buddhism as the best of all religious systems and the Dalai Lama as the gentlest (!) of all beings continues to spread successfully. One of the latest high points in this glorification has been the cover story on *Buddhism* in the German news magazine *Spiegel* (April 1998). In the case of the Dalai Lama this magazine, well-known for its critical stance towards religion and anti-church articles which often did not shy away from a sharp cynicism, let itself be used as a propaganda instrument by an atavistic, autocratic religious system. The author of the euphoric article, Erich Follath, was like so many of his colleagues completely captivated by the god-king's charm after a visit to Dharamsala. "I show old friends like you around my garden!", the *Kundun* had smiled at the *Spiegel* editor and shown him his flower beds (*Spiegel*, no. 16, April 13, 1998). The journalist Follath gratefully accepted this personal gesture by the divine charmer and in the same moment abandoned his critical awareness and his journalistic responsibility. His article is an embarrassing collection of historical distortions and sentimental celebration of the *Kundun*, his country, and his religion. [1]

If we were to characterize the obvious self-presentation of His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama on the world political stage, we would soon recognize that he strictly abides by (a) four positive rules and (b) four negative ones which proves him to indeed be a masterful manipulator:

1. (a) In public, always argue using the terms of *Mahayana* Buddhism. Refer to compassion, love, and peace. (b) Never mention the sexual magic mysteries and power-political obsessions of *Vajrayana*.
2. (a) Lead all arguments that could in any manner be directed against Buddhism into the "emptiness" (*shunyata*) and in public "*shunyatize*" even your own religious approach: "nothing has an inherent existence" — that is, everything comes from nothingness and everything ends in nothingness. (b) In contrast, never mention in public the Tibetan gods, demons, and spirits (the *Nechung* oracle) or their power-political program (the *Shambhala myth*), who sink into this "emptiness" only to push through their "Buddhocratic" interests and tantric ideology globally.
3. (a) Apparently take on all progressive currents within western culture (democracy, freedom of opinion, human rights, individualism, women's rights, ecology, humanism, and so forth). (b) Never mention the autocratic clerical intentions of the tantric system, and under no circumstances the establishment of worldwide control by the androcentric Buddhist monastic state which can perpetuate itself via the doctrine of reincarnation.
4. (a) Smile and always appear friendly, ordinary, modest, humble, and human. Always play the gentle "Lord of Compassion", the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara*. (b) Never display annoyance or pride in public, and thickly veil the destructive aspects of those gods and demons (*herukas*) whose emanation on earth you are. Be silent about the cruelty of Lamaist history.

The smile and the friendly words of the “living Buddha” are only the outer facade of his many-layered personality. But it is not what the Dalai Lama says, but rather the religious system which stands behind him and what his gods command that determine the politics of Tibetan Buddhism, as we have shown in the course of our study. It is not the new pseudo-Western constitution of the Tibetans in exile which counts, rather it is in the final instance the “political theology” recorded in the *Kalachakra Tantra* and *Shambhala myth* and the sexual magic practices prescribed there for the accumulation of power which are decisive. It is not the relaxed and friendly relations between His Holiness and western celebrities which are a problem, but rather his close contacts with occult sects like Shoko Asahara’s AUM cult and with representatives of “esoteric Hitlerism” like Miguel Serrano. The reason they are extremely problematic and very dangerous is because both occultists (Asahara and Serrano) have placed the philosophy and practice of *Vajrayana* and the warlike *Shambhala myth* at the center of their destructive world view. It is not the conflict between the Dalai Lama and Beijing which poses a threat for the West and the world community, but rather in contrast a possible future cultural conquest of the “Chinese dragon” by the “Tibetan snow lion” (of Lamaism). The *Shambhala myth* provides the optimal ideological foundations for an aggressive, pan-Asian superpower politics and for the unleashing of a Buddhist *jihad* (holy war). It is not the gentle downward-looking *Avalokiteshvara* and the “simple monk” from Dharamsala, but rather *Yama* the god of death and *Kalachakra* the time god with his woman-destroying cult which are the problem, since they are likewise incarnated in the figure of the Dalai Lama. It is not that the Dalai Lama privately seeks advice from an oracle that is problematic, but rather that a Mongolian war god speaks through the state oracle. It is not the popularity that Hollywood has lent the *Kundun* which should be criticized, but rather the use of these media giants to distort historical facts.

Yet the atavistic and mythic pattern of Tibetan thought and Tantric Buddhism is completely ignored by people in the West (as long as they are not converted Buddhists). If it were to be examined, one would inevitably reach the conclusion that there is absolutely no freedom of opinion in the Lamaist culture of Tibet, and hence no real criticism either, since the Tibetan people have always been administered autocratically, and even in exile have no democracy, having “opted” for a constitutionally fixed(!) Buddhocracy instead. Further, since doctrine has it that the highest ruler of the country, the Dalai Lama, is not a state president but a living “god” (an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* and the *Kalachakra* deity), his will must always be valued more highly than that of his subjects, even should they have a seat in the exile Tibetan government.

Additionally, Tibet has no ordinary history but rather a sacred one, with the *Shambhala myth* at its center and as its goal. For this reason, every political act of the *Kundun* and the Tibetans in exile must be subsumed within this eschatology. Lamaist culture is in its essence undemocratic, fundamentalist, and totalitarian, and sees nothing bad in this — in contrast, it holds itself to be the best system of all. Thanks to the doctrine of reincarnation, the ruling clerical elite views its absolutist exercise of power as unlimited even by death.

Every reform policy, every affirmation of democratization, every profession of peace remains a lie for as long as the Dalai Lama has not renounced the tantric ritual system, especially the *Kalachakra Tantra*. At heart this rests on the magic transformation of sexuality into power and ultimately aspires to the militarily enforced enthronement of a sacred/political world king. Nonetheless, without even the slightest concession and headed by the *Kundun*, all schools of Lamaism continue to hold fast to the — as we believe we have demonstrated them to be — extremely destructive and humanity despising rites and associated political ideology.

Even if the Tibetan clergy were to relinquish its political privileges for a time in a “liberated” Tibet, the idea of the hegemony of a patriarchal monastic dictatorship as the supreme goal would remain, as this is the core of the entire tantric ritual system. The theocratic system that can be found in all the past cultures of the world only survives today in Tibetan Buddhism and parts of Islam. In both cases it demands worldwide recognition and distribution. Among the Tibetans in exile it does so — grotesquely — from behind a mask of democracy, human rights, the ecumenical mission, and the protection of nature.

However, when they not in public, the Tibetan Gurus do not shrink at all from talking about their mystic envisionings, plans for conquest, apocalyptic battles, or the worldwide expansion of a Buddhocracy. In their followers’ circles the *Shambhala myth* has long since become a power-political factor. Yet it is not even mentioned in the world media. The lamas tailor their outwardly presented depictions of Tibet to their audience. If the tenor of an academic conference is one of sober discussion, then the arguments of the Tibetans in exile are likewise sober, analytic, and critical. If another meeting is more emotional and esoteric, then the very same people there subscribe to the fantastic historical myths of the eternally peaceful and mysterious, occult highlands (*Shangri La*) which at the first conference they claimed to be the invention of a errant “western orientalism”. In turn, at the congresses of “committed Buddhists”, the Tibet of old is built up as the sanctuary of all those values which are gaining ground in postmodern society. „Tibetan exiles”, Toni Huber writes, „have reinvented a kind of modern, liberal Shangri-La image of themselves”, in that they adopt images from the protest movements of the industrialized West „which are now transnational in scope and appeal: environmentalism, pacifism, human rights, and feminism” (Huber, 2001, p. 358). Yet Western values, like the separation of ecclesiastical and secular power, equality before the law, the rule of law, freedom of expression, social pluralism, political representation, equality of the sexes, and individualism, had no place in the history of Tibet.

But it is not just a result of pure naïveté when government sources in Europe and America express the opinion that autocratic Lamaism is compatible with the fundamentals of a modern constitution. Behind this also lie the tactical politics of power with an “impending” Chinese threat. Washington in particular is most interested in making use of an oppressed Tibet as an argument in discussions with China, the USA’s greatest competitor.

This dangerous antagonism between the two superpowers (China vs. the USA) is efficiently stirred up by their respective internal politics, and Dharamsala does not let a chance pass without pouring gas on the flames. The *Kundun* with his loud and “heartfelt” criticism of China is a American king-piece in the political chess game between Washington and Beijing. In it, official posts in the USA are thoroughly informed about the “true” history of the old and the new Tibet as well as the “undemocratic” circumstances in Dharamsala. They are advised by such objective scholars as, among others, A. Tom Grunfeld and Melvyn C. Goldstein. In public, however, the State Department has until now followed the pro-Tibetan arguments of the Hollywood actor and *Kalachakra* initiate, Richard Gere.

### **“Clash of Religions”: The fundamentalist contribution of Lamaism**

In the last fifteen years, the West has to its great surprise discovered just how much political explosiveness religiously based strategies for world domination (like the *Shambhala myth*) and magic/mystic practices (like the *Kalachakra ritual*) have been able to develop today, on the threshold of the third millennium. Catching the western cultures unprepared, theocratic (and Buddhocratic) visions of the most varied schools of belief have burst forth explosively from the depths of the human subconscious, where they have survived in hiding since the bourgeois Enlightenment (of the 18<sup>th</sup> century). Events in Iran, the country where the mullahs established the first smoothly functioning Moslem religious state of the modern era, triggered a culture shock in the West. All at once the atavistic attitudes and rules of violence, the warrior ethic, racism, intolerance, discrimination against women, the dictatorship of the priesthood, the persecution of nonbelievers, inquisitions, visions of global wars and the end of the world, etc., with which theocratic (and Buddhocratic) systems are associated were once more (as in the Middle Ages) were very current issues.

In a widely respected book, *Clash of Civilizations*, the American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington, has indicated with convincing arguments that the confrontations which await the world of the 21st century primarily have neither economic, class conflict, nor nationalistic causes. In their search for identity, people have since the eighties been grouping themselves around “cultures”, but most especially around religions.

Surprisingly, all religious traditions have in the meantime overcome their opposition to technology. “The West” and “technology” are no longer identified with one another as they once were. Even the most radical fundamentalists use high-tech gadgets and the latest means of communication. It is the students from the faculties of engineering and the natural sciences who fell particularly drawn to religious ideas. According to Huntington, social conflicts (rich against poor) are also no longer a primary factor in the causes of war. Cultural spheres, such as that of Islam for instance, can encompass both extremely rich and extremely poor countries at the same time. The critical factor is the common religion.

The West and its values, Huntington argues, is becoming increasingly weak as a central power, while other cultural power blocs are crystallizing. Of these the two most significant are Islam and China. Its universalistic claims are increasingly bringing the West into conflict with other cultural spheres, most seriously with Islam and China. ... Islam and China embody grand cultural traditions that are very different from those of the West and, in the eyes of these cultural spheres, vastly superior to them. The power and self-assurance of these two spheres are increasing in comparison to the West, and the conflicts of interest and values between them and the West are becoming more numerous and intense (Huntington, 1997, p. 19). Wars, under certain circumstances world wars, are for Huntington hardly avoidable.

If we take Huntington's suggestion seriously, we have to ask ourselves whether the *Kalachakra Tantra* and *Shambhala myth* of the Dalai Lama do not represent an extremely dangerous ideological bomb which could set the whole world aflame. As we know, the Time Tantra predicts an eschatological apocalyptic war with Islam. In the year 2327, the prophecy says, *Rudra Chakrin*, the "wrathful wheel turner" from *Shambhala*, will lead his army into battle against the *Mlecchas* (Moslems). A contribution from the Internet has thus rightly compared the vision of the Time Tantra with the idea of an Islamic holy war (*jihad*). "The *Kalachakra* initiation", writes Richard P. Hayes, "seems to have been a call to the Buddhist equivalent of jihad ... the *Kalachakra* was interpreted externally as a call to Holy War (to preserve the Dharma against its enemies)" (Hayes, Newsgroup 11).

For historical reasons Islam has proven itself to be the most culturally aggressive counterforce to western culture. The struggles between the Christian Occident and the Islamic Orient are part of a centuries old tradition. With their explicit hostility towards Islam the *Kalachakra Tantra* and *Shambhala myth* are thus stirring up a fire which is already glowing fiercely on the current world political stage and has even spread to the center of the greatest western power (the USA).

According to Huntington, China will very soon be the West's most potent economic and ethnic challenger. The country will develop into the core state and magnet of a Sinitic cultural sphere and will culturally dominate all its neighbors; the entire East Asian economy will be centered around China. Unification between the People's Republic and Taiwan is just a question of time. Huntington sees the "Middle Kingdom" as the one power that could one day cast doubt on the *global* influence of the West.

In contrast to Islam, the philosophy (which can hardly still be described as communist) currently dominant in China, that terms itself the "inheritance of Confucian thought" both on the mainland and in Taiwan, is not outwardly aggressive and oriented towards conquest. On a general level, the Confucian ethos stresses authority, hierarchy, a sense of family, ancestor worship, the subordination of the rights of the individual to the community, and the supremacy of the state over the individual, but also the "avoidance of confrontations", that is, wars as well.

We must nevertheless not forget that in the course of its history China has never been free from external ideological influences. Buddhism in its various forms, as well as Christianity and communism are cultural imports and have at times had a decisive influence on the politics of the country. In the 14th chapter of Part II of our study we thus posed the question of whether the Chinese might not also be susceptible to the *Shambhala myth's* global visions of power. The "Middle Kingdom" has always had spiritually and mythically based claims to world domination. Even if it has not tried to impose these militarily, the Chinese Emperor is nonetheless revered as a world king (a *Chakravartin*). As we have demonstrated in our detailed portrait of Mao Zedong, such a claim survived even under communism. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama is most aware of this. For a good five years now his missionary work has been concentrated on Taiwan (Nationalist China). We have quoted several prophecies from his own lips which foretell a decisive codetermining role for Lamaism in shaping the Chinese future. Taiwan, which — according to all prognoses — will sooner or later return to the mother country, can be considered the springboard from which the Tibetan monks and the new Nationalist Chinese recruits ordained by them could infiltrate the Chinese cultural fabric.

### Return to rationalism?

Why is the West so helpless when it encounters the "battle of cultures", and why is it surprised every time violent eruptions of fundamentalist religious systems (as in Islam for instance) occur? We believe that the reasons for this must be of a primarily epistemological nature: Since the time of the Enlightenment, the occidental culture has drawn a clear dividing line between the church and the state, science and religion, technology and magic, politics and myth, art and mysticism. This division led to the assessment of all state, scientific, technical, political, and artistic phenomena purely according to the criteria of reason or the aesthetics. Rationalism unconditionally required that the church, religion, magic, myth, and mysticism have no influence on the "scientific culture of the Enlightenment". Naïvely, it also projects such conceptions onto non-Western cultural spheres. In the issue of Tibet, for example, the West neatly separates Tantric Buddhism and its mysteries (about which it knows as good as nothing) from the political questions of human rights, the concept of democracy, the national interests of the Tibetan people. But for the Dalai Lama and his system, politics and religion have been united for centuries. For him and for Lamaism, power-political decisions — of whatever kind — are tactical and strategic elements in the plan for world conquest recorded in the *Kalachakra Tantra* and *Shambhala myth*.

Since rationalism does not take the power-political effectiveness of myths and religions seriously enough, it refrains from the outset from examining the central contents of religious cults (such as the *Kalachakra Tantra* for example). The mysteries of the various religious orientations have never been more hidden and mysterious than in the Age of Reason, for the simple reason that this has never examined them.

To be successful, however, a critical analysis and evaluation of an ancient world view must fulfill three conditions:

1. First of all it must be able to immerse itself in the world view of the particular religion, that is, it must be capable of perceiving the world and the universe through the eyes and filters of the religious dogmata to be examined. Otherwise it will never learn what it is all about. In the specific case of Tibetan culture, this means that it must familiarize itself with the sexual magic and micro-/macrocosmic philosophy of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the political ideology of the *Shambhala myth* so as to be able to understand the politics of the Dalai Lama and his executive at all.
  
2. Only after obtaining exact knowledge about the basis, goals, and history of the religion in question should it compare these with western values so as to then make an evaluation. For example, it must relate the “female sacrifice” and the absorption of *gynergy* through yoga practices in Buddhist Tantrism to contemporary demands for the equality of the sexes. The West cannot overcome the myths by denying their power. It has itself had to experience their unbroken and enormous presence even in the twentieth century. In the case of national socialism (Nazism) the mythological world view developed an all but superhuman potency. Only if investigative thinkers risk entering into the heart of the religious cult mysteries and are prepared to engage with the innermost core of these mysteries can such “religious time bombs” be diffused. For this reason,
  
3. the requirements for a critical reappraisal of the cultures are that their mystery cults and their contents be brought into the arena for public discussion — a procedure which is sure to send a shiver down the spines of the majority of fans of the esoteric and fundamentalists. But such an open and public discussion of the mystery knowledge is not at all an achievement of our liberal-democratic age. If, for example, we consider the critical and polemic disputes of the fathers of the Christian church with the various religious currents of their times and the rejoinders of the latter, then we can see that between the 2nd and the 5th centuries there was — despite the very primitive state of communication technologies — a far larger openness about fundamental questions of how the world is viewed than today. These days, religions are either blindly adopted or rejected *per se*; back then religions were made, formed, and codified.

As absurd as it may sound, “western rationalism” is actually the cause of occultism. [2] It pushes the esoteric doctrines and their practices (the *New Age* for example) into the social underground, where they can spread undisturbed and uninhibited, and lay claim to one mind after another unnoticed, until one day when — as in the case of national socialism in Germany in the 30s, the Mullah regime in Iran in the 80s, and perhaps the *Shambhala myth* in Asia in the ??s — they burst forth with immense power and draw the whole of society into their atavistic wake. [3]

On the other hand, the “critical descent” into the mystery cults of the religious traditions makes possible valuable learning processes. We did not want to reach the conclusion in our analysis of Buddhist Tantrism that everything about traditional religions (Buddhism in this particular case) ought to be dismissed. Many religious teachings, many convictions, practices, and visions appear thoroughly valuable and even necessary in the establishment of a peaceful world community. We

too are of the opinion that the “Enlightenment” and western “rationalism” alone no longer have the power to *sensibly* interpret the world, and definitely not to change it. Man does not live on bread alone!

Hence, in our view, the world of the new millennium is thus not to be demythologized (nor disenchanted or re-rationalized), but rather humans have the power, the right, and the responsibility to subject the existing myths, mysteries and religions to a critical examination and selection process. We can, may, and must resist those gods who exhibit destructive conceptions and dualist thoughts and deeds. We can, may, and ought to join those who contribute to the construction of a peaceful world. we can, may, and perhaps should even seek new gods. There is, however, a great danger that the time for a fundamental renewal of the religious process will disappear if the atavistic/warlike world views (with western help as well) continue to spread further and are not replaced by other, peaceful depictions of the world (and myths). The existing traditions (and the deities and mysteries behind them) may only be of help in such a process of renewal in as far as they adhere to certain fundamentals like mutual respect, peaceableness, openness, equality of the sexes, cooperation with nature, charity, etc.

The cultural critic Samuel P. Huntington rejects from the outset the idea of a universal culture, a new world culture as unrealistic and unwanted. But why actually? The general interconnection, the technologization, the interlacing of the economy, the expansion of international travel have like never before in the history of humankind generated the communicative conditions for the discussion of a global cultural beginning. This is, at least as far as certain western values like human rights, equality of opportunity, democracy, and so forth, already encouraged by the *world community* (especially the UN) with more or less large success. But on a religious level, everything remains the same — or will there be new mysteries, oriented to laws of human harmony without a need to sacrifice intercultural variety and colorful splendor?

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#### Footnotes:

[1] We will not go into the individual points raised in the article here as we have already discussed them at appropriate points throughout the book.

[2] The word “occultism” in its current sense first emerged during the age of rationalism.

[3] An interpretation of national socialism on the basis of its “occult and mythological background” is still considered highly dubious by the majority of established historians and cultural researchers in the West. But there is no political movement of the 20th century which more deliberately and effectively derived itself from myths. We are indebted to C. G. Jung for several articles on Hitler and his movement, in which the depth psychologist interpreted the “Third Reich” and the “Führer” as the epiphany (or

incarnation) of the violent Germanic god *Wotan/Odin*, whose spirit descended into not just the dictator but also his followers. With this analysis, Jung — as Miguel Serrano saw clearly — comes close to a depiction of the Tibetan tulku principle. Since his article revealed a certain sympathy with the Nazis, it was withdrawn from circulation by the author after the Second World War. Even though we strictly distantiate ourselves from Jung's fascist sympathies, we nonetheless consider his diagnosis of Hitlerism as a "*Wotan cult*" to be completely accurate. If we identify the deity who is pulling the strings behind a political movement, it does not mean in the slightest that we must therefore become followers of this deity and its mysteries (in the case in question a disciple of the Wotan cult and the Nazis). In contrast, only then can we gain a differentiated relation towards the mythic forces and powers that determine a culture — we can just as well combat it as follow it, just as well publicly condemn and accuse it as enter into a compromise with it.

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# Critical Forum for the Investigation of the Kalachakra Tantra and the Shambhala Myth

In Sanskrit, *Kalachakra* means "The Wheel of Time ", but it is also the name of the supreme Tibetan "Time God". The *Kalachakra Tantra* is held to be the last and the most recent (10th century) of all the tantra texts that have been revealed, and is considered by the lamas to be "the pinnacle of all Buddhist systems".

Over more than 25 years, many hundreds of thousands have been "initiated" through the *Kalachakra Tantra* by the XIV Dalai Lama. Of these, large numbers are illiterate people from India. But even the "educated" participants from the West barely know anything about what this ritual actually entails, since alongside its public aspect it also has a strongly guarded secret side. In public, the XIV Dalai Lama performs only the seven lowest initiations; the subsequent eight of the total of 15 initiations continue to remain *top secret*.

There is no talk of these eight secret rites in the pamphlets, advertisements or brochures, and especially not in the numerous affirmations of the XIV Dalai Lama. Here, the *Kalachakra Tantra* appears as a dignified and uplifting contribution to world peace, which fosters compassion with all living beings, interreligious dialog, interracial and intersubjective tolerance, ecological awareness, sexual equality, inner peace, spiritual development and bliss for the third millennium ("*Kalachakra for World Peace*"). The motto for the whole show is quoted from the XIV Dalai Lama: "Because we all share this small planet earth, we have to learn to live in harmony and peace with each other and with nature." The highly focused, extremely tantric initiation of Tibetan Lamaism thus garners the kudos of a "transcultural and interreligious meeting for world peace".

But are the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala* myth truly pacifist? Do they really encourage harmony and cooperation among people? Do they make any real contribution to freedom and justice, equality of the sexes, religious tolerance or ethnic reconciliation? Are they a comprehensive, politically humanist, democratic and nonviolent contribution to world peace?

Over the past few years, increasing criticism has been leveled at Tibetan Buddhism, the history of Lamaism, conditions among the Tibetans in exile and the XIV Dalai Lama himself, criticism which is not from the Chinese quarter. Historians from the USA have begun questioning the widespread glorifying whitewash of Tibetan history (Melvin C. Goldstein, A. Tom Grundfeld). Critical Tibetologists have raised accusations of deliberate manipulation by official Tibetology (Donald S. Lopez Jr.). Tibet researchers have investigated the "dreams of power" that are activated and exacerbated by the "Tibet myth" nurtured by Lamaists (Peter Bishop). Prominent

politicians have had to admit the evidence of their own eyes that the Chinese are not committing "genocide" in Tibet, as the Tibetans in exile continue to claim (Antje Vollmar, Mary Robinson). Former female Buddhists have condemned, on the basis of personal experience and with great expertise, the systematic and sophisticated oppression and abuse of women in Tibetan Buddhism (June Campbell). Psychologists and psychoanalysts have investigated the aggressive and morbid character of Lamaist culture (Robert A. Paul, Fokke Sierksma, Colin Goldner). From within the Dalai Lama's own ranks, overwhelming evidence of his intolerant, superstitious and autocratic nature has been amassed since 1997 (Shugden Affair). Lamaism's rituals have also been subjected to strong criticism. The humanistic, peace-loving, tolerant and ecumenical intentions of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala* myth it contains have been interrogated in a comprehensive study (Victor and Victoria Trimondi). Biting criticism of the XIV Dalai Lama and his system founded on magic has also been broadcast in German, Swiss and Austrian television (Panorama, 10 nach 10, Treffpunkt Kultur). In Munich, on the occasion of a visit by the Tibetan religious potentate (in May 2000), there was even a split in the SPD, whose "pro-Dalai Lama" wing had invited the Tibetan "God-King" to a gala event. The media as a whole has been equally divided: the Dalai Lama has been accused of, among other things, having an undemocratic and autocratic leadership style, suppressing any political opposition, acting to repress religious minorities; letting policy be determined by possessed oracles rather than through dialog and debate, deliberate falsification of the history of Tibet, maintaining uncritical relationships with former members of the SS and neo-nazis, defaming critics and conducting misogynist rituals. *Felix Austria* – this criticism seems to have floated by the beautiful mountains of Austria like a slim cloud that hardly turns a head.

Here are some of the points raised by the critics of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala* myth it contains that the Critical Forum Kalachakra is putting forward for discussion:

The secret rites of the *Kalachakra Tantra* may not, under pain of medieval punishment for body and soul, be discussed with the uninitiated. The "*head and heart*" of whoever reveals its occult secrets "*will burst asunder*" and they will burn in the deepest hell. There are good reasons for this, then in the eight highest initiations there is talk of things that stand in complete contradiction to a humanist system of values (Michael Henss – *Kalachakra – ein tibetisches Einweihungsritual* – Zurich 1985, 46).

The *Kalachakra-Tantra* is anything but pacifist, rather, it prophesies and promotes a bloody religious war for world domination between Buddhists and non-Buddhists (*Shambhala* myth).

The text explicitly names the "leaders" of the three monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) as opponents of Buddhism: "*Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, the White-Clad one [Mani], Muhammad and Mathani [the Mahdi]*". The *Kalachakra Tantra* describes them as "*the family of the demonic snakes*" (*Shri Kalachakra* I. 154).

Thus, the *Kalachakra Tantra* is opposed to all religions of Semitic origin, and for this reason has been pressed into service by right-wing radical and anti-Semitic circles for their racist propaganda.

The *Kalachakra Tantra* invokes a global war between the Islamic and the non-Islamic world in which the followers of Mohammed are presented as the principal enemies of the Buddhists. The original text refers to Mecca, where the "*mighty, merciless idol of the barbarians*" lives as a "*demonic incarnation*" (*Shri Kalachakra* I. 154).

Murderous super-weapons possessed by the Buddhist Shambhala Army and employed against "enemies of the Dharma" are described at length and in enthusiastic detail in the *Kalachakra Tantra* (*Shri Kalachakra* I. 128 – 142). Modern Lamaist interpretations of these military arsenal fantasies indulge in spectacular comparisons to the weaponry of the 20th and 21st centuries.

The Buddhist art of war in the Shambhala battles is obviously at odds with basic human rights, and is instead described in the original text as "*merciless*" and "*cruel*". "*The supremely ferocious [Buddhist] warriors will cast down the barbarian horde*" and "*eliminating*" them "*together with their followers*". (*Shri Kalachakra* I. 163/165).

All the participants in a Kalachakra initiation (i.e., also those in Graz) have the questionable privilege of being reborn as "*Shambhala Warriors*" in order to be able to participate in the prophesied apocalyptic battle as either infantry or officers, dependant on rank. High lamas of particular lineages have already been assigned to commanding positions (E. Bernbaum – *Der Weg nach Shambhala – Auf der Suche nach dem sagenhaften Königreich im Himalaya* – Hamburg 1982, 252, 35).

According to a vision of the Tibetan Lama Kamtrul Rinpoche, it is the reincarnated Dalai Lama himself, who as wrathful field marshal will lead the Buddhist army into the Shambhala battle (*Rudra Chakrin*) to conquer all evil in the universe. Propagandists for the *Kalachakra Tantra* peddle a primitive martyr cult that resembles that of the Moslem jihad warriors: he who falls in the Shambhala war is rewarded with guaranteed entry to the Shambhala paradise (E. Bernbaum – *Der Weg nach Shambhala – Auf der Suche nach dem sagenhaften Königreich im Himalaya* – Hamburg 1982, 253).

At all levels, the *Kalachakra Tantra* fosters the postulation of (and negotiation with) a conceived "enemy" and – completely at odds with the original teachings of the historical Buddha or the ethical demands of Mahayana Buddhism – advocates war between "good" and "evil", between the "faithful" and the "unbelievers".

The *Kalachakra-Tantra* contains a Buddhocratic doctrine of state which is even more "theocratic" than the fundamentalist Islam concept of theocracy, then the Buddhist "Chakravartin" (world ruler) is seen as a direct "incarnation" or "emanation" of the Supreme Buddha (Adi Buddha), as a walking "God-Man" on earth, whilst the "Caliph" is only God's (Allah's) "representative" on earth, who does not even have the rank of a "prophet".

At the pinnacle of the authoritative Buddhocratic Kalachakra state, on the "Lion Throne" resides an absolute "Priest-King" (*Chakravartin*), who unites in his person religious, political, juridical and military might. There is absolutely no civil "separation of powers" here. Those familiar with the constitutional position of the Dalai Lama in traditional Tibet (up until 1959) know that the office of the Tibetan "God-King" corresponded to that of a Chakravartin in miniature. The highly questionable and half-hearted democratization reforms that the XIV Dalai Lama has introduced among the Tibetans in exile would be obliterated afresh through the Buddhocratic, state political consequences of the *Kalachakra Tantra* teachings.

The right to a Buddhocratic world supremacy is an explicit demand of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Here too we find a fundamentalist correspondence to Islamist ambitions to global domination. If both systems are set to confront another as deadly enemies in a bloody apocalyptic battle, then this is a consequence of the logic of their theocratic-cum-Buddhocratic absolutism.

Modern Buddhocratic visions for our planet which are welcomed by the XIV Dalai Lama are built upon the foundations of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. See in this regard Robert A. Thurman's book – *Revolution von Innen – Die Lehren des Buddhismus oder das vollkommene Glück* (1999), where the author develops the authoritative political theory of a "Buddhaverse". As early as 1979, Thurman, described by Time magazine as the "spokesman of the Dalai Lama" in the USA, saw the Tibetan religious leader in a dream enthroned as a "Time God" over the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York, while the great swarm of notables – mayors, senators, company directors and kings, sheiks and sultans, celebrities and stars buzzed around him; caught up in the maelstrom of the 722 dancing deities of the Kalachakra Tantra swarmed around him just like bees in pinstripes around a huge hive.

In the secret higher stages of initiation the *Kalachakra Tantra* demands the unconditional and unlimited surrender to the absolute will of the administering guru (in this case the Dalai Lamas as Kalachakra master). The "ego consciousness" and the personality of the initiand are extinguished step by step, so as to transform him into a human vessel for the in part warlike and aggressive tantric deities and Buddhist figures. Hence, the *Kalachakra Tantra* brings no "ennoblement", "transfiguration" or "integration" of the individual, but rather its systematic "elimination" in the interests of a codified religious pattern.

In the eight secret higher initiations of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, extreme mental and physical exercises are used to push the initiand into a state beyond good and evil. The original text thus requires the following misdeeds and crimes of him: killing, lying, stealing, infidelity, the consumption of alcohol, sexual intercourse with lower-class girls. As in all the other tantras, here too these requirements can be understood both symbolically and literally. Even the XIV Dalai Lama finds it legitimate for a Kalachakra adept to kill a person under special circumstances, "*who are harmful to the [Buddhist] teaching*". He insists, however, that this be "*motivated by compassion*" (Dalai Lama – *The Kalachakra Tantra – Rite of Initiation* – London, 1985, S. 348 ff.) .

In the highest magical initiations, what are known as "unclean substances" are employed. The *Kalachakra Tantra* recommends the consumption of the meat of various taboo animals. Human meat (*maha mamsa*) is also employed as a ritual substance. It is usually taken from the dead and, writes the tantric grand master and Shambhala King, Pundarika, in his traditional *Kalachakra* commentary, is the "*meat of those who died due to their own karma, who were killed in battle due to evil karma or and due to their own fault, or that of robbers and so forth who were executed*". He continues with the advice that it is sensible to consume these substances in the form of pills. The flesh of innocent people, who have been killed as sacrifices to the gods, out of fear, as part of an ancestor cult, out of desire (greed) or for money, is laden with "unspeakable sin" and may not be used in the rituals. "*But which falls in the bowl unasked-for is without unspeakable sin*" – and may therefore be put to use. (In: John Ronald Newman - *The outer wheel of time: Vajrayana Buddhist cosmology in the Kalachakra Tantra* - Madison 1987, 266 f.).

Numerous ritual objects employed in the ceremonies are made from corpses (bowls made from human skulls, trumpets made of leg bones, bone necklaces). A glance at the great Kalachakra thangka (wall tapestry) which will be hanging above the throne of the XIV Dalai Lama during the whole of the ceremony in Graz is enough to convince one of the wrathful character of this ritual. The Time God "Kalachakra" depicted there together with his consort, the Time Goddess "Vishvamata" in sexual union while standing, hold in their total of 32 hands 24 objects of an aggressive, morbid or warlike nature (hooks, sword, machete, drums and vessels made of skull bowls, a scepter whose peak is adorned with three severed human heads, etc.)

In the secret higher initiations of the *Kalachakra Tantra* sexual magical rites take place, the aim of which is to transform "sexuality" into worldly and spiritual power. The real or imaginary women (both are possible) used in these represent particular forms of energy, whereby age plays an important role. One begins with ten-year-old girls. Up to the age of 20, the female sexual partners represent positive characteristics. If they are older they are regarded as the bearers of the negative energies of scorn, rage, hate etc. and as "demonesses". In the 8th to 11th levels of initiation into the *Kalachakra Tantra* sexual magic experiments are made with just "one" woman; in the 12th to 15th levels, the so-called *Ganachakra*, a total of 10 women take part in the ritual along with the master and the initiand. It is the pupil's duty to offer his Lama the women as a "gift". "Laity" who are to be initiated into the ritual are supposed to offer up their female relatives (mother, sister, wife, daughter, aunt, etc.). One can read in the *Kalachakra Mûlatantra* that "*If the pupil does not hand these wisdom consorts over to his master, in order to protect his family, then [the master] may not perform this ritual.*" Consecrated monks and novices, however, may make use of unrelated women from various castes. In the secret ritual itself the participants experiment with the masculine and feminine seed (sperm and menstrual blood). In the *Kalachakra Tantra* women are regarded as mere "energy donors" for the male practitioners and once the ritual is over they have no further role to play (see in this regard Nâropâ – *Iniziazione Kâlacakra* – Roma 1994).

In the current age, which according to the teachings of Lamaism is hastening towards an apocalyptic end (Kali yuga), the *Kalachakra Tantra* has a particularly destructive and aggressive character. It includes special rites which are supposed to accelerate the general decline through symbolic acts. "*What is Kalachakrayana [the Kalachakra Way]?*" – asks one of the leading experts in the field of Tantrism, the Indian Shashi Bhusan Dasgupta, and tellingly answers, "*The word kala means time, death and destruction. Kala-Chakra is the Wheel of Destruction.*"

These are just some of the problematic aspects that critics object to in the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala* Myth it contains. They ought to provide sufficient grounds to question whether this ritual can still be seen as having a humanistic, peaceful, tolerant, freedom-loving and ecumenical character. In addition, the *Shambhala* myth integrated into the *Kalachakra Tantra* has – insofar as it has been accorded historical and ideological relevance – led to extremely aggressive behavior patterns, megalomaniac visions, conspiracy theories and terrorist activity. But above all it exercises a special fascination for neo-fascist circles and provides a source of ideological inspiration for them.

In the wars between Byelorussians, Bolsheviks and Mongolians, the *Shambhala* myth was associated with ideas of the return of Genghis Khan at the beginning of the twenties. The Mongolians saw themselves in this conflict as "Shambhala warriors". Their military actions were extremely bloodthirsty.

The Italian fascist and right-wing extremist philosopher of culture, Julius Evola, saw in the mythic realm of *Shambhala* the esoteric center of a sacred warrior caste and suspected that the palace of the world king, whose escutcheon was the swastika, could be found there. He held lectures on these views for the the SS "Ahnenerbe".

In the occult literature (the "Nazi mysteries"), "masters" from *Shambhala* are depicted as the hidden string pullers who are supposed to have participated in the "magical" creation of the Nazi regime (Trevor Ravenscroft, Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier u. a.).

In the ideological SS underground of the post-War period and in the "SS mysticism" of the nineties, the mythical kingdom of *Shambhala* is seen as a sanctuary for an aggressive and morbid "Nazi religion" (Wilhelm Landig, Jan van Helsing u. a.).

The *Shambhala* myth is one of the ideological pillars of "esoteric Hitlerism". This is the worldwide, racist, occult doctrine of the Chilean diplomat, Miguel Serrano, and the Indian by adoption, Savitri Devi ("Hitler's Priestess")

With his concept of the *Shambhala warrior*, the now deceased Tibetan Lama, Chögyam Trungpa (1940-1987), laid the first foundations for a potential "Combative Buddhism", already found in large parts of East Asia, in the West. Instead of monasteries, Trungpa's *Shambhala warriors* live in military camps, meditation is accompanied by military parades, in place of the begging bowl his pupils carry weapons and rather than monastic robes they wear military uniforms. The master himself no longer moved around in Buddhist style, with yellow and red monastic robe and walking staff and sandals, but rather rode forth on a white horse (in accordance with the apocalyptic prophecy of the Kalachakra Tantra) in peaked cap, tunic and high boots. The Shambhala coat of arms can be seen on the saddle of a horse in a photo of the martial Trungpa.

The *Shambhala* Myth provides the ideological basis for the terrorism of the Japanese apocalyptic guru, Shoko Asahara. He derives his apocalyptic visions from the teachings of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. His intention is to accelerate the onset of the Shambhala war and this is his justification for his poison-gas attacks on the Tokyo Underground. Asahara was the first leader of a sect to make the "uninvolved" from outside of his own organization the target of his deadly attacks and thus opened the floodgates for the religiously motivated international terrorism that has become the number one topic in the world community.

Even if these fascist and terrorist interpretations of the *Shambhala* myth are erroneous, it is therefore all the more pressing that the XIV Dalai Lama and his followers lay bare the Kalachakra ritual in all its detail, correct possible distortions, projections and misuses, and distance themselves publicly from its more problematic contents, that or edit them out of the traditional texts. Instead, however, there have in the past been numerous friendly meetings between the Tibetan religious leader and former SS figures (Heinrich Harrer, Bruno Beger), the founder of "esoteric Hitlerism", Miguel Serrano, and the terrorist, Shoko Asahara, whom even after the Tokyo attacks he described as his "friend, albeit an imperfect one". Only later did he distance himself from him. It is the duty of the city of Graz, the provincial government of Styria, the various political factions, the media, the intellectuals and not least the Christian institutions, to begin a broad public discussion of this ritual, so as not be drawn into something which is diametrically opposed to their original intentions.

Then, according to statements in numerous international media reports, Tibetan Buddhism is the "trend religion" of our time. Through the XIV Dalai Lama, through both his charismatic appearances and his ostensibly humanist speeches and writings, a gigantic, unreflective cultural import of Eastern concepts into the West is taking place, one which displays fundamentalist characteristics and serves as an ideological foundation for various fundamentalist camps and can continue to so serve in the future. The Buddhist leader appeals to people's deep need for harmony and peace, but the history of Lamaism itself, the contents of the Tibetan tantras and their complex of rituals, even the conditions which prevail among the Tibetans in exile, are anything but peaceful and harmonic.

There are passages in the *Kalachakra Tantra* which brazenly call for a "war of the religions", which are intolerant and aggressive. In Tibetan Buddhism we have an archaic, magic-based religious system, which has remained to a large extent untouched by the fundamentals of the Western Enlightenment. This is also the reason it is so attractive for right-wing extremists. For centuries it has led to social injustices that any freedom-loving citizen of today would be forced to reject. The equality of the sexes, democratic decision making and ecumenical movements are in themselves foreign to the nature of Tantric Buddhism, although the XIV Dalai Lama publicly proclaims the opposite.

In a reaction to 11 September 2001, *Der Spiegel* drew attention to aggressive elements and fundamentalist currents in the three monotheistic religions in an article entitled "Religious Mania – The Return of the Middle Ages". As is so often the case in such cultural critiques, Buddhism was spared. This is untrue! All of the topics criticized in this article (battles against unbelievers and dissidents, religious wars, armament fantasies, theocratic visions of power, apocalyptic predictions, misogyny, etc.) are to be found in a particularly concentrated degree in the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

The Critical Forum Kalachakra (CFK) demands that a wide-ranging cultural debate over the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala* myth. The CFK collects informations, distributes and translates documents.

## Glossary of some Tantric Terms

The Sanskrit terms are written without diacritical marks.

Literal translations appear in quotation marks.

**abhisheka** – „annointing“ – a form of consecration, often involving sprinkling, that transforms an heir apparent into a royal sovereign, or a novice into a monk or member of a religious order. In Tantra, abhisheka qualifies a person to initiate or consecrate others.

**acarya** – “teacher, preceptor” – a guru or instructor of sacred or secret teachings.

**advaita** – “nondualism” – the philosophical position that all is One

**ahimsa** – “noninjury” – doctrine of noninjury or non-violence

**ajna** – name of the sixth of the seven chakras of the yogic body. It is at the level of the ajna that the three principle subtle channels come together in a plait between the eyebrows. See also chakra and nadi

**Amitabha** - Amitabha is the most commonly used name for the Buddha of Infinite Light and Infinite Life. A transhistorical Buddha venerated by all Mahayana schools and, particularly, Pure Land. Presides over the Western Pure Land (Land of Ultimate Bliss), where anyone can be reborn through utterly sincere recitation of His name, particularly at the time of death.

**Anuttarayoga Tantra** – “Tantra of Supreme Yoga” – one of the four classes of Buddhist Tantric texts, sects, and teachings

**arhat** - a Buddhist saint who has attained liberation from the cycle of Birth and Death, generally through living

a monastic life in accordance with the Buddhas' teachings.

**arya** - any individual ennobled by his/her own continuing effort on the path to enlightenment.

**asana** – “seated position” – yogic posture in which a practitioner holds himself immobile while practicing breath control and various types of meditation.

**asura** - titanic demons, enemies of the gods.

**Avalokitesvara** - The name is a compound of Ishwara, meaning Lord, and avalokita, looked upon or seen, and is usually translated as the Lord Who Observes (the cries of the world); the Buddhist embodiment of compassion as formulated in the Mahayana Dharma.

**atman** – the individual self or soul

**avadhuti** – in Tantric Buddhist mapping of the yogic body, the female energy that rises up from the lower abdomen to the heart or cranial vault, where it *melts* or is merged with the subtle male principle. See also candali.

**bardo** (Tibetan) – “liminal passage, intermediate state” – the state of consciousness in the course of migration between death and rebirth. A stage varying from seven to forty-nine days, after which the Karmic body from previous lives will certainly be reborn.

**bija** – “seed” – the seminal essence of a sacred utterance or formula, usually monosyllabic, which constitutes the energy of the deity it acoustically embodies. See also mantra.

**bhiksu** - Religious mendicant; Buddhist fully ordained monk. Bhiksuni is the equivalent term designating a woman.

**bodhi** – “enlightenment” – perfect knowledge or wisdom by which a person becomes a Buddha.

**bodhicitta** – “thought of enlightenment” – the mental state in which an individual takes the decision to become an enlightened being. In Buddhist Tantra the inner energy of fluid that flows through the practitioner’s chakras following the internal union of female Wisdom (prajna) and male Skill in Means (upaya).

**bodhisattva** – “One who possesses the essence of enlightenment” – a deified saviour figure, a fully enlightened being who remains in the world in order to release other creatures from suffering existence.

**buddha** – “enlightened being”

**candali** – “female outcast” – the Tantric consort; also the subtle body, the “red element”, female energy that rises up from the lower abdomen to melt the male “white element” in the cranial vault. See also avadhuti.

**Carya Tantra** – “Tantra of Observance” – one of the four classes of Buddhist Tantric texts, sects and teachings.

**chakra** – “circle, wheel” – one of the usually seven energy centres aligned along the spinal column of the yogic body.

**chakravala** - the nine chakravala or concentric mountain ranges or continents, separated by eight seas, of a universe.

**chakravartin** – “wheel-turner” – an universal emperor and protector of Buddhism

**cintamani** - a talismanic pearl, a symbol of bestowing fortune and capable of fulfilling every wish.

**citta** - mind or heart. the two terms being synonymous in Asian religious philosophy.

**dakini** – one of a group of powerful female beings, possessed by the power of flight, who mediate between the worlds of the buddhas, the demonic, and the human in Tantric ritual and meditative practice. A woman embodying enlightened wisdom.

**chöd yul** – “The object that is to be cut off” – system of dramatic shamanic practices that effect the severing or cutting off of demons as a means to annihilating the ego that otherwise keeps one trapped in suffering existence.

**damaru** – hourglass-shaped two-headed “schaman’s drum” carried and played by Tantric deities and practitioners.

**deva** – “shining one” – a celestial deity who is nevertheless “un-liberated”.

**dharini** - extended mantra used in esoteric branch of Buddhism to focus and expand the mind. Its words, or sounds, should not communicate any recognizable meaning.

**dharma** – the teachings of the Buddha; the law, doctrine, or ethical precepts of Buddhism; an underlying cosmic principle taught by the Buddha; constituent element of reality; a phenomenon. The complex of religious and social obligations that a devout s required to fulfil; right action, duty, morality, virtue

**dharmadhatu** – the absolute reality experienced in enlightenment

**dharmakaya** – “body of teaching” – in Mahayana and later forms of Buddhism, the third and most exalted of the three bodies of the Buddha, composed of Buddha’s teachings. Tantric Buddhism knows of a fourth, called the diamond body (see also vajrakaya).

**dhatu** – the space or sphere of absolute reality itself

**dhyana** – ritual visualisation, inner vision, yogic meditation; instructions for visualizing a Tantric deity.

**dorje** – see: vajra

**guru** – a religious percept or teacher, often the person from whom one receives initiation or consecration.

**hatha yoga** – body of yogic practice that combines posture, breath control, seals, and locks as a means to bodily immortality and supernatural power.

**ida** – mapping of the yogic body, the major subtle channel identified with the moon that runs the length of the spinal column, to the left of the medial channel. See also nadi.

**inana** – “gnosis” – supreme knowledge; the highest form of knowledge, which affords liberation from suffering existence.

**kalpa** – sacred precept, law, ritual, or ordinance; an eon, a fantastically long period of time.

**kama** – desire and sexuality used as a means to liberation or transcendence of the human condition

**karma** - volition, volitional or intentional activity. Karma is always followed by its fruit, Vipaka. Karma and Vipaka are oftentimes referred to as the law of causality, a cardinal concern in the Teaching of the Buddha.

**Kriya Tantra** –“Action Tantra” – one of the four classes of Buddhist Tantric texts, sects and teachings.

**kshatriya** - the second of the four Hindu Castes at the time of Shakyamuni, they were the royal caste, the noble landlord, the warriors and the ruling castes.

**maharaja** - a great or superior king.

**kundalini** – “She who is coiled”; the female energy that lies coiled at the base of the yogic body. Through combined techniques, the Kundalini is “awakened” and made to rise through the charkas to the cranial vault. See also: shakti.

**lama** – a Tantric teacher or Guru in Tibetan Buddhism

**linga** – the male sexual organ. See also yoni.

**mahamudra** – “great seal” – gnosis realizing the mind’s own emptiness in a non-dual, androgynous fashion. The “inner woman” as part of the yogic body. The ultimate nature of mind; an instantaneous practice for purifying the mind.

**mahasiddha** – “great perfect being” – “great sorcerer” – a highly perfected and accomplished mystic; one of a legendary class of demigods or superhuman Tantric practitioners who propagated Tantra throughout South Asia and Tibet.

**mani** - a jewel, gem, precious stone; especially a pearl bead or other globular ornament.

**maithuna** – “Pairing, coupling” – sexual intercourse as a means of liberation, gnosis and transcendence of the human condition; the fifth and ultimate Tantric “sacrament”; an iconic representation of a pair engaging in sexual intercourse. See also yab-yum.

**mandala** – “circle” – an idealized circular model of the cosmos, with the source of cosmic or temporal power located at the centre, and deities or beings representing lesser powers or energies radiating outward toward the periphery, the limits of the system. In Tantric practice, Mandalas are often employed as visual meditation support.

**mantra** – “mental device, instrument of thought” – an acoustic formula whose sound shape embodies the energy-level of a deity; a spell, incantation or charm employed in Tantric ritual or sorcery. Chants, magical formulae.

**maya** – “That which is measured out; cosmic illusion”

**Meru** - the central mountain of every universe.

**mudra** – “seal” – a symbolic gesture of the body with ritual meanings. In Buddhist Tantra mudra is one of the terms used for a male practitioner’s female consort.

**nadi** – one of an elaborate network of 72.000 subtle ducts of the yogic body through which breath and energy are channelled.

**nirmanakaya** – “form body” – the first of the three bodies of the Buddha, the physical form in which the historical Buddha appeared to the world.

**nirvana** – “extinction” – the soteriological goal of Buddhism; the final cessation of rebirth into suffering existence.

**pingala** – mapping of the yogic body, the major subtle channel identified with the sun that runs the length of the spinal column, to the right of the medial channel. See also nadi.

**pitha** – “bench, footstool” – a pilgrimage site and power place identified with a goddess and her male consort.

**prajna** – “wisdom” – insight into the true nature in reality; a Tantric practitioner’s female consort. The prajna becomes deified as a Buddhist goddess with a bipolar relationship to the male upaya (“skill”) represented by a god, a buddha or a bodhisattva.

**prajna-paramita** – “perfection of wisdom” – the female embodiment of wisdom. Prajna-paramita becomes deified as a Buddhist goddess, also considered to be the “mother of all buddhas”.

**prana** – “breath” – the breath of life; one of the multiple breaths or energies that, flowing through the nadis, vitalizes and is the active element in the transformation of the yogic body.

**pratyekabuddha** – a Buddha who loves a solitary existence and realizes nirvana for himself alone.

**puja** – “honouring, veneration”; the body of practices that comprise the worship of a deity.

**rainbow body** (Tibet. ja’lus) – supernatural body attained through Tantric techniques by means of which the practitioner is able to disappear into another dimension.

**rasa** – “juice, flavor” – an essential fluid of yogic, alchemical or Tantric practice. The *semen* *feminile*.

**sadhaka** – a Tantric practitioner

**sadhana** – Tantric practice

**shakti** – “energy” – the energy of a deity personified as his female consort

**samadhi** – total yogic integration; ecstatic consciousness

**samatha** – “tranquil abiding, quiescence” – a Buddhist form of meditation.

**samaya** – “coming together” – conventional rule or practice; sacrament.

**sambhogakaya** – “body of shared enjoyment” – the second of the Buddha’s three bodies, in which he preaches to the assembled bodhisattvas.

**samsara** – “flowing together” – the cycle of transmigration; suffering existence, phenomenal reality.

**sangha** – “assembly” – Buddhist society, comprised of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen

**siddha** – “perfected being”- a Tantric practitioner who has realized embodied liberation. The siddhas also form a class of demigods who inhabit the atmospheric regions.

**siddhi** – “perfection” – one of the many supernatural powers possessed by siddhas as a result of their practice, their sadhana. Included among the siddhis are the power of flight, invisibility, the power of attraction and the power to realize one’s every desire.

**shravaka** – “auditor” – a person who attains emancipation by listening a buddha.

**stupa** – a funerary monument in the shape of a dome or pyramid, containing a relic of a Buddha or some other objects of veneration; a meditation support symbolizing the formless body of the Buddha and the essential structure of the cosmos.

**shunyata** – “emptiness” – the principle that all objects of the senses, mental concepts, and categories are void of self-existence.

**susumna** – mapping of the yogic body; the major subtle channel identified with fire, which runs down through the centre of the spinal column. See also nadi.

**tathagata** - “one who comes thus” – an epithet of the Buddha or of one the five celestial buddhas

**terma** – “treasure” – indigenous Tibetan Buddhist collections of works, mainly containing instructions for special forms of Tantric practice. They are brought to light by treasure-discoverer specialists, either in the form of hidden manuscripts or of visionary revelations with no physical substrate.

**torma** – conical flour and butter cones used as ritual offerings to a person’s enlightened beings and protectors.

**tulku** – “the form body of a Buddha” – the recognized reincarnation of a past Buddha master.

**upaya** – “skill in means” – array of expedient devices employed by bodhisattvas to enlighten beings trapped in suffering existence. Upaya becomes deified as the male member of a bipolar relationship – with the female prajna (“wisdom”).

**vajra** – (Tibetan dorje) – “Thunderbolt, diamond, penis” – adamantine symbol of strength, immovability, and transcendent nature of the state aimed at by Tantric practitioners; name of an implement used in Tantric ritual.

**vajrakaya** – “diamond body”

**vajrayoga** – “adamantine union” – the fusion of wisdom realizing emptiness and compassion, which spontaneously manifests appearances in order to guide living beings to freedom from samsara.

**vidya** – “esoteric knowledge, wisdom” – wisdom personified as a goddess. Vidya is one of the terms used for a male practitioner’s female consort.

**yab-yum** (Tibetan) – “father-mother” – term used to describe deities in sexual union.

**yantra** – “instrument of restraint; machine” – one of a group of instruments, including diagrams, amulets, and alchemical apparatus, used by a Tantric practitioners to control or subdue his own mind, demonic beings, or elements of the phenomenal world.

**vidam** – “vow, oath, covenant” – a tutelary deity.

**Yoga Tantra** – “Tantra of Yoga” – one of the four classes of Buddhist Tantric texts, sects and teachings.

**yogin** – a male practitioner of yoga.

**yogini** – one of a class of powerful, fierce and often sexually alluring female demigods and human sorceresses who imitate or are identified with them; a female Tantric practitioner.

**yonis** – the female sexual organ, womb.





